2d artist

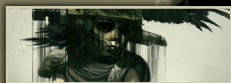Concept Art, Digital & Matte Painting Magazine

JEFFREY SIMPSON

We chat with concept artist & illustrator for Big Sandwich Games, Jeffrey Simpson about his influences, styles, tips and his home city, Vancouver

Articles
Sketchbook of Jorge Molina, Dr. Grordbort's interview with Greg Broadmore

Interviews
Marta Dahlig, Jeffrey Simpson

Galleries
Julia Bax, Kev Chu, Mike Thompson, plus more!

Making Of's
Worm Licker by Ioan Dumitrescu

Tutorials
Space Painting Tutorial Series: Planets and Starfields: Part 5 – Colonised Planets, plus more!

Editorial

Welcome to Issue 035 – and what an issue! Marta Dahlig, Jeffrey Simpson, Jorge Molina, Eduardo Peña, Emrah Elmasli, Chee Ming Wong, Nykolai Aleksander, Ioan Dumitrescu, and that's not all! So let's get to business and find out what's in store for you all this month…

First up, we have an interview with the lovely **Marta Dahlig**, whose stunning character illustrations flood the interview pages of 2DArtist this month. Marta is incredibly down to earth and, although we all look to her as a leading artist in today's digital painting world, she humbly declines the notion that she is a "big name" (but we think otherwise!). Marta talks to us about how she started out in CG just 7 years ago, and gives us an insight into her working life today. You can check out the interview with Marta on **page 007**. Our second interview is with **Jeffrey Simpson**, who, at just 22 years old, is working in the video game art industry as well as dabbling with film concept art and comics! Check out the dark concepts from Jeffrey on **page 019** and enjoy the witty interview that he's kindly given 2DArtist this month.

I was not so long ago pointed to **Jorge Molina**, this month's Sketchbook artist, and simply couldn't resist getting him on board this issue with a feature on some of his latest character sheets for his upcoming projects – take a look on **page 029**. Our bonus article this month comes in the form of an interview with **Greg Broadmore**, the senior conceptual designer behind **Dr. Grordborts**. This is a huge article, simply because it's so great that we couldn't cut it down any more than what you'll find on **page 037**. It's full of humour, intelligence, and most importantly tonnes of fantastic artwork that will make your eyes weep with joy!

Our tutorials hit a high this month with **Chee Ming Wong**'s stunning paintings of colonised planets **(page 089)**. This particular tutorial is the end of the first section of his Space Painting tutorials, and we feel he's really outdone himself on this one – a fantastic example! We can't wait to see what he brings us next month, so be sure to stay tuned for that. And because one (or two) is never enough where tutorials are concerned in 2DArtist, we this month welcome back **Eduardo Peña** and **Emrah Elmasli** to tackle the speed painting: Fear engulfed them as they realised they were about to die. See **page 089** for two ever different interpretations to our often ridiculous speed painting briefs! And to round up this month's tutorials, **Nykolai Aleksander** brings us Part 2 of her Human Face tutorial series on **page 113**. Nykolai has been keeping me up-to-date almost daily with Part 3 of this tutorial series, and all I'm going to say is: Do not miss next month! Trust me when I say that you'll definitely want to see the end result of this stunning tutorial miniseries!

Finally, we thank **Ioan Dumitrescu** for his Making Of article this month, discussing the creation of his recent 2DArtist Gallery featured image, "Worm Licker". So check out **page 121** for that, and then get yourself painting! Thanks as always for your support, and enjoy! **Ed.**

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What's in this month?

Free Stuff!

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2d artist

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Get the most out of your Magazine!

If you're having problems viewing the double-page spreads that we feature in this magazine, follow this handy little guide on how to set up your PDF reader!
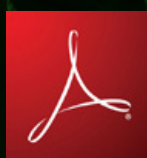
Setting up your PDF reader

For optimum viewing of the magazine, it is recommended that you have the latest Acrobat Reader installed.

You can download it for free, here: DOWNLOAD!

To view the many double-page spreads featured in 2DArtist magazine, you can set the reader to display 'two-up', which will show double-page spreads as one large landscape image:

1. Open the magazine in Reader;
2. Go to the View menu, then Page display;
3. Select Two-up Continuous, making sure that Show Cover Page is also selected.

Contributing Artists

Every month, many artists from around the world contribute to 3DCreative & 2DArtist magazines; you can find out all about them here. If you would like to be a part of 3DCreative or 2DArtist magazine, please contact:

lynette@zoopublishing.com

Jeffrey Simpson

22 year old concept artist and illustrator currently working in Vancouver B.C., Canada. Jeff is still getting a feel for the various industries that he's interested in, such as games, comics, freelance and personal illustration. He works primarily in Adobe Photoshop, usually portraying darker, ambiguous themes. Jeff's works try to find a balance between fantasy, sci-fi and pop culture with expressionism and surrealism.

http://www.surrealsushi.com / jeff_lite@hotmail.com

Emrah Elmasli

Turkish Concept Artist based in London, UK, working at Lionhead Studios as a full-time senior concept artist. Before coming to the UK he was a freelance artist living in Istanbul, Turkey, and was working for various clients like Crystal Dynamics, Irrational Games, CGToolkit and Fantasy Flight Games, as well as ad agencies in Istanbul. He then found himself in the UK. He draws everyday and enjoys the city in his spare time.

www.partycule.com / emrah@partycule.com
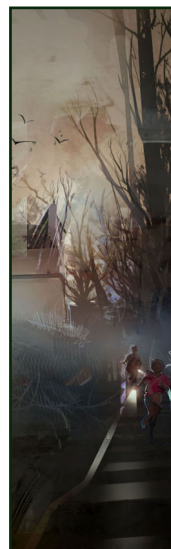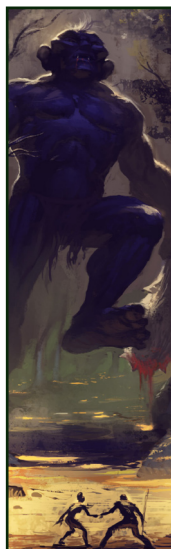
Eduardo Peña

Educated as a graphic designer at the Jorge Tadeo Lozano University in Bogota, Colombia, and inspired by films like Blade Runner, he discovered the discipline of conceptual art for the entertainment industry and has since been developing this artistic interest ever since. He currently works as a conceptual artist at Immersion Games in Colombia, and also as a professor at the Andes University, leading workshops.

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Dr Chee Ming Wong

Has over 8 years of creative visualisation and pre-production experience, having worked on various independent game projects, publications and CGI pre-production artwork. He is currently the CEO of his own digital art studio, Opus Artz, based in London. Previous work includes his role as senior concept artist and visual lead for *Infinity: The Quest for Earth* MMO 2009, plus numerous commercial publications.

www.opusartz.com / chee@opusartz.com
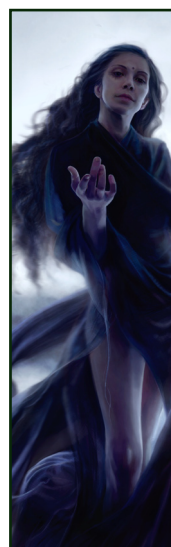
Nykolai Aleksander

Born in 1978, Nykolai spent the first 17 years of her life in Germany, then moved to England to study A-Level Theatre and Music. She returned to Germany for a short while after, working in film as a set assistant, and in 1999 moved to the UK for good. In 2000, Nykolai started drawing. With the discovery of a Wacom tablet in 2002, her work suddenly took off on a path she hadn't quite expected!

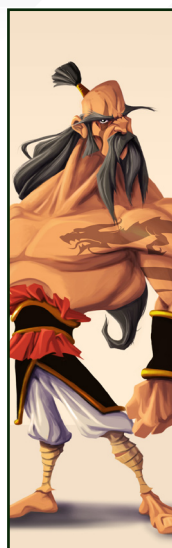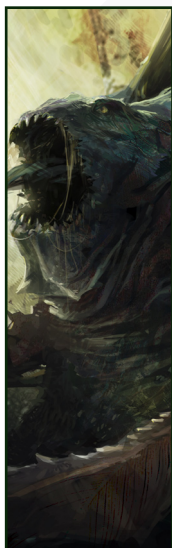http://www.admemento.com / x@admemento.com

Ioan Dumitrescu

20 year old architecture student and self-taught concept designer. He loves drawing the things he imagines in his head, and trying to convey a story to the viewer through them. He is currently working freelance.
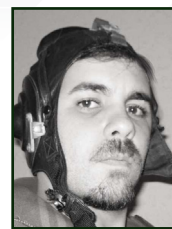
jononespo@yahoo.com

Felipe Fernández Morell

Studied art in Montevideo, Uruguay. He then worked freelance in Barcelona in different media – from publicity to editorial to web. He's currently working as a production and concept artist in the games industry.

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contactos@ffilustracion.com

Matthew Ciompala

Freelance comic book artist and book illustrator based in Warsaw, Poland. He's self-taught and is still exploring the world of art as an artist. He's currently in the final class of high school and after this year will be trying to get into the most notable Polish animation school in Lodz. At this moment he's working on two comic books and for two Polish gaming magazines as an illustrator.

http://www.sickteo.blogspot.com

teo-disturbed@o2.pl
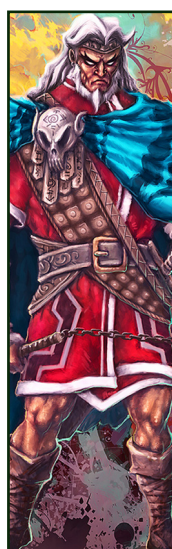
Raffy Dematawaran

Has been creating art and working in design professionally for over 15 years. His first freelance job started when he was still at college, at which time he was joining art competitions for the prizes and recognition, later realising that it was knowledge and experience that was far more rewarding! He rarely resists work offers now, whether major or minor projects.

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shatteredfx@hotmail.com

Image by Greg Broadmore

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

DIGITAL ART MASTERS :VOLUME 4

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

DEADLINE: 30TH NOVEMBER, 2008 - 11:59PM GMT

Following in the success of our first three books in the 'Digital Art Masters' series, we would like to announce the 'Call for Entries' for the forth book in the series 'Digital Art Masters: Volume 4'.

The first 3 volumes of 3DTotal's book series, have featured some of the best 3d & 2d artwork from such artists as Marek Denco, Levente Peterffy, Laurent Pierlot, Philip Straub, James Paick, Jonny Duddle, Benita Winckler, Matt Dixon and Damien Canderlé. The one thing that set the 'Digital Art Masters' series apart from other gallery/catalogue books was the fact that we wanted to show the readers how the images were created, so each artist wrote a breakdown overview to accompany their piece in the book.

'Digital Art Masters: Volume 4' will again be showcasing some of the finest 2d and 3d images from talented artists across the globe. Initial submissions need to be of your final image only to enable entrance into the selection process. Chosen artists then need to supply an additional text overview with 'making of' and 'work in progress' images. See samples at bottom of page to give you a good idea of
what is required.

A full Submissions Guide, Schedule and Calendar for all submissions is availble from this web link:

http://www.3dtotal.com/damv4_callforsubmissions/

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"I have an immense skill of making a great mess wherever I go, and sure, it's a great excuse to blame it on my "artistic soul", but other than that I am as normal and down to earth as it gets, really!"

Marta
Dahlig

Welcome to the world of Marta Dahlig! A rising star in the digital art community, we were lucky enough to catch up with Marta recently and find out more about her life, her work and the fantastic character illustrations that she's become so well-known for.

Marta Dahlig

Wow… Marta Dahlig! I never really know where to start with names this big, so can you help me out a little and ease us into the interview with a little information about yourself; how you originally got into the digital painting field and how things have led you to where we find you today?

Oh, please don't say that! As uncool as it might sound, I am very far from what you might describe as "artistic". I have an immense talent for making a great mess wherever I go, and sure, it's a great excuse to blame it on my "artistic soul", but other than that I am as normal and down to earth as it gets, really!

As for my beginnings, I have been painting since my earliest childhood – art started as simply a way to spend my free time and has gradually become a means of expressing my opinions and emotions.
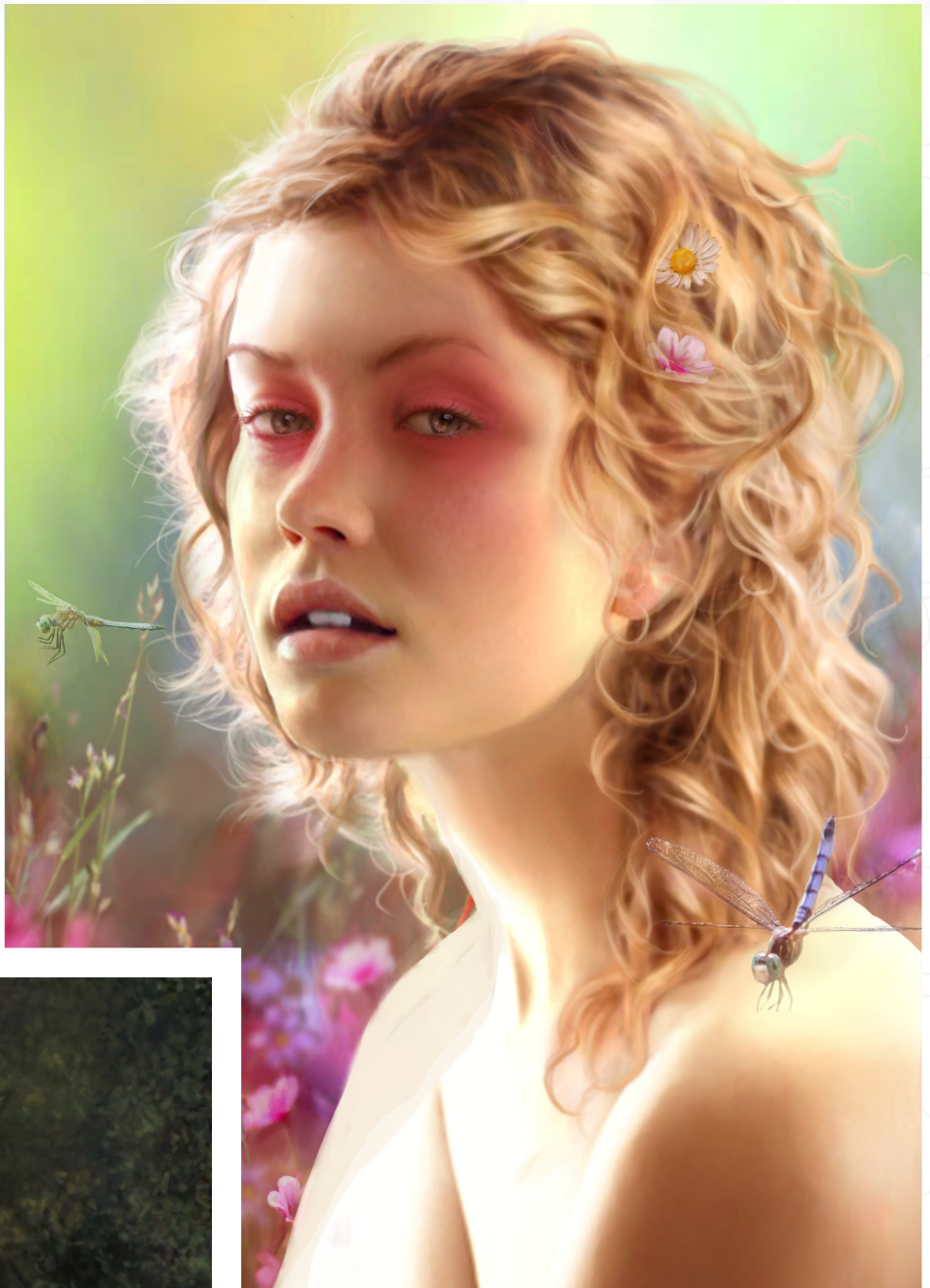
I was introduced to digital art around seven years ago, at the age of fifteen, by an acquaintance whose CG manga fan art I adored. I fell in love with the technique instantly! I started painting with a computer using a mouse in Painter 7, and, after a couple of months bought my first cheap (and very trashy) tablet.

In search of feedback, I started displaying my works on various Internet forums, which helped me to evolve in terms of technique as well as the content of my work.

The evolution of my so-called career as a digital artist came quite suddenly. Actually, I think I was a bit lucky to paint something that became popular so quickly. The first big breakthrough in my artistic life came in

2004 when I released the first of my Seven Deadly Sins series – "Vanity". The warm, enthusiastic feedback came as a total surprise! Basically, from that point onwards, everything progressed at a rapid speed – thanks to the "popularity boost", I got my first corporate projects and have been working commercially non-stop ever since!

I'm sure it has been more than luck that has got you to where you are today; we are all extremely impressed with your talents and can see that you have worked very hard to build up this great repertoire of fantastic artwork – you should be very proud! How long did it take you to get to grips with Painter? Did you ever have those moments where you felt like giving up? If so, how did you get through those and push yourself forwards?

Learning a painting programme basically consists of two stages: learning available tools and options, as well as the actual workflow. I first started working with Procreate's version of Painter and learned it very quickly, as it was just so intuitive. It took me only a couple of days to learn everything I needed to know in order to work smoothly. The number of brushes was rather small, but they were flexible enough to cover all my needs.

Photoshop, however, was a totally different experience. In general, I would say that I am a "software person" and learn computer programmes quickly, but it took me a long time to learn PS satisfyingly. Learning about the options and filters only took a while, but using the program for painting felt very uncomfortable at first. The brushes seemed artificial and the lack of the natural blending that's present in Painter felt very awkward as well.

So indeed, I faced motivation problems like never before! To resolve the issue I dealt with the problem in little steps: I worked mainly in Painter, giving Photoshop a small try from time to time – it took me a couple of months of

working on and off like this to be able to paint in PS freely. The process was long and, I daresay, a bit frustrating – but it was sure worth it in the end!

Looking at your portfolio as thumbnails on my monitor, I am pleasantly met with a vast array of stunningly beautiful character illustrations, all of which are highly regarded images in the digital art community! So how do these images generally come about? Can you talk us through the creation of your artworks from concept through to final image?

In general, I would say my working process consists of two stages: planning and actual painting. The thinking stage is as important as it is painful. I never paint for the sake of depicting something pretty – there has to be at least some edge to a painting or a hidden meaning to keep me interested in it!

I am extremely scientific about the whole process, which might not sound super cool, but I can't imagine myself painting first and then
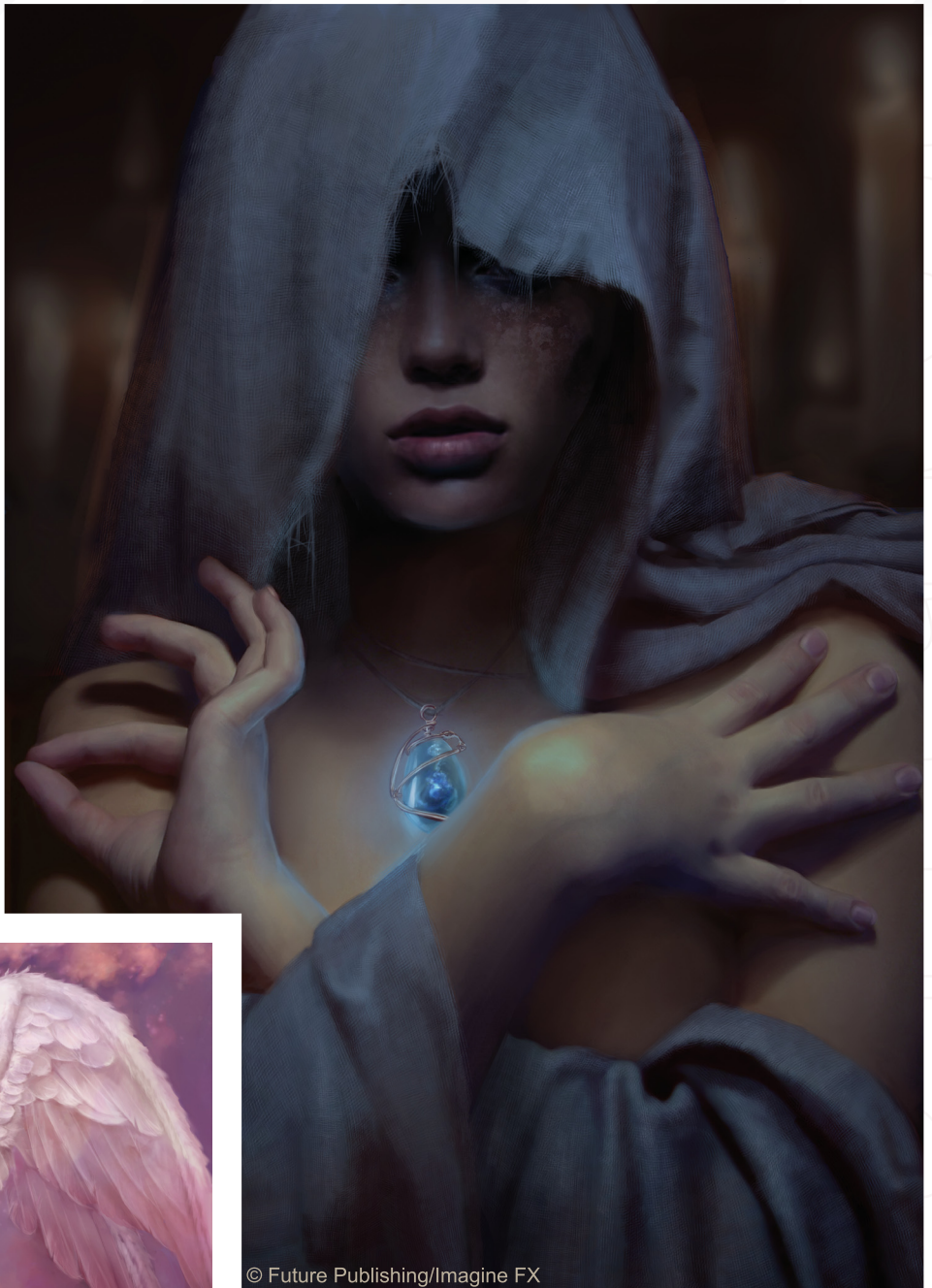
thinking about what was it that I wanted to convey afterwards. Art, in my understanding, has to be as intellectually appealing as it is visually.

I devote hours to planning my works out. Usually I take something I find aesthetically attractive and push the idea to make it intellectually challenging. I introduce contrasting symbols or storytelling elements that will enrich the piece's narrative. Of course, more often than not I end up changing things as I paint, but having a plan for an image ensures that I know what my goal is – what it is exactly that I want to achieve.

Only when I know what to paint and how, can I start the actual painting part. If the chosen subject is especially challenging, I dig for references and research on the topic to understand its historical and cultural contexts.

Quite often I end up planning an image for a longer time than what is required to paint it – I sometimes spend two weeks on and off thinking about an image, while the actual painting takes a couple of evenings. For a standard painting, the technical execution usually lasts from 20 to 40 hours spread among a couple of evenings, powered by cups of steaming tea or coffee and obligatory almond chocolate!

It's really great to learn a little about the thought process that goes into your artwork creation – thanks for sharing all that with us! Have you ever tried to paint something without putting thought to it beforehand, letting your mind and hand roam freely? Or do you find (like me) that a blank canvas can be pretty daunting if you haven't already decided on what you're going to do? With this in mind, how do you keep your motivation up and the ideas constantly flowing? Can you work on more than one piece at any time, or do you generally take each as it comes?

To be honest, I feel absolutely lost when I try to paint something without any plan. I can do loose practice sketches or speedpaintings without any preparation but, as the meaning of a piece is far more important to me than anything else, I would simply not feel comfortable painting a full blown image without having anything to convey.

It is very frustrating at times, since it requires much more pondering and "theory crafting" than spontaneous painting would. To keep my motivation up and my ideas flowing in harder situations, I simply try not to think about painting! Usually, the more I try to force myself to think of something, the harder and longer the process gets. So I do other things instead; I listen to music, read and generally try to relax my mind. For more "active" remedies, I sometimes write down word associations with a theme of choice to boost creativity or browse art online in search of inspiration.

When it comes to workflows, crossed deadlines quite often require me to work simultaneously on a few images at a time but, whenever possible,

I try to work on one painting at a time. Feeling emotionally involved in most of my pieces requires my full attention in terms of planning and execution, which makes multi-tasking for various projects quite complicated. For example, I never work on personal and commercial projects simultaneously, so that I don't distract my attention for one project with the other – I prefer to carefully plan one image at a time and be sure every painting gets my full commitment.

Viewing your works you can actually feel the emotions of your characters – almost as if the works were photographs of real people captured in life. I'm sure you get told this all the time, but it's really quite exceptional that you can illustrate a character in such a way that we can feel exactly what he or she is feeling through the strokes of paint applied to your digital canvas. Incredible! So do you have any artist secrets that help you to achieve this depth of emotion in each painting?

I suppose that is where the aforementioned painful planning stage comes in. If an artist knows exactly what they want to depict, it is a natural step to extend their idea onto the facial expression.

VANITY

It is such a common problem of fantasy art, modern as well as past – you see a beautiful character, an original design, but no emotion at all. Especially nowadays; the search for perfect technique replaces the ambition to actually state something through a painting.

My remedy for this is treating my characters as real people – I underline their personality with facial features. I love to paint strong women – no weeping princesses or bland fairies, I prefer "my girls" to be provocative and daring (never sexually though). This doesn't mean I never paint subtle characters though; I just always try to search for something original in a face and make it less sugary-perfect. And so, I tend to paint stronger jaws, bolder eyebrows or bigger noses than the beauty cannon would suggest.

I think it's great that you're going for a more real woman – have you ever thought about going to extremes and painting images that show something more "real", perhaps even verging the grotesque (I'm thinking along the lines of Jenny Saville's works, now!)? Or do you find that the industry wants to see beautiful painterly women in magazines and books – is this where the money is?

I find Saville's work absolutely amazing, as she shows the highest level of understanding of the human form – you have to be a true master to exaggerate proportions or perspective while still staying realistic!

However, to be honest, I have never really considered going in her direction. Not because it is obviously more profitable to draw what is commonly considered beautiful and "easy to digest" intellectually, but because I don't think I am yet artistically mature enough to dare to experiment so much. Moreover, I think that the focus of our work lies in different places – while Saville makes the essence of her works lie in the human shape, I use characters, combined with other elements, as a means of depicting something else, like creating an allegory or a variously interpretable story.

You tend to use both Painter and Photoshop for your artworks. What does each type of software have over the other that makes it necessary for you to switch between the two? What do you generally use each software for, and how do you know when to switch to the other for a certain part of your painting?

It took me a very long time to actually learn Photoshop – I used to work in Painter for years. If I was to generalise, I find Painter best

for highly stylised artworks with looser brushstrokes, while PS is best for extreme photo realism.

The biggest advantage of Painter over PS is the unimaginable ease of blending – there's no need to play with opacity while eye-dropping colours all the time, all you have to do is select one brush (e.g. Blender) and run over desired areas to smooth colour transitions.

Painter is also great when you want to keep your image looser. The oily brushes are wonderful for hinting details in the background (especially landscapes) – by putting in some rougher blobs you automatically blend the colours together!

What makes me love Photoshop is the ease of creating custom brushes and the unlimited number of possibilities you get by combining different tooltips with various options. You can create a universal round brush with ragged edges for general painting, or tools adjusted for specific texturing jobs, e.g. a linen texturing brush or a skin blending tool. Of course, that is not to say that custom brushes are mandatory to use, but they do make life so much easier!

Learning when to switch between the two came to me naturally, after I worked enough in both of them to compare their ease of usage and effectiveness. Nowadays, I use Photoshop for sketching, early colour blocking and zoom-in detail defining, and Painter for blending stages (especially textiles) as well as all kinds of detail hinting.

So you're pretty versatile when it comes to painting, being able to switch so easily between the two most popular 2D programmes! Do you work traditionally, too, or are you an exclusively digital girl? We seem to hear increasingly from artists these days that they often use 3D elements in 2D works to get things like perspective correct. Is that something you've ever considered or tried? And how about the ZBrush movement that seems to be sweeping the digital communities worldwide – does that have any appeal to you?
I used to work in traditional mediums before I moved onto the computer, working mostly with pencils and watercolour. I have to admit that I moved away from this direction greatly over time – painting digitally is much more comfortable and efficient. The main reason I am digital, however, lies elsewhere. I still remember the frustration of spoiling a pencil image just because I wanted to experiment with it – one

change too much could absolutely devastate the final effect and there was no way to take it back! With computers, we have the blessed "undo" and "save as" options, which greatly encourage artists to experiment. Nowadays, I sketch really rarely, mainly when I lack a computer and still feel a need to let myself "run wild".

As far as mixing 2D and 3D goes, I've always admired artists who can do both, and the idea of giving it a try myself seemed very appealing some time ago. It is indeed a great combination, to use one's painting skills for texturing whilst mixing it with the clean technical side of rendering. I find this "cleanliness" extremely appealing, but at the same time I am not exactly sure whether this mix would fit in with my personality and painting style. My working process (aside from the thinking part) is very chaotic and messy and so I am afraid it might make the creation part a bit too technical and scientific. But as they say: you never know unless you try, so I might still try it out someday!

I can feel that you're a happy artist who is content with her work, but do you ever have off days where you just wish you could be somewhere else doing something else? If so, where would you go and what would you do to take a break and get away from the world of digital painting?
Well, to be honest, I am more often than not quite far from being happy about my work. I am my biggest critic and usually when I look at my works, all I see are things to improve. It sometimes gets awfully frustrating, as I rather seldom feel truly happy with what I do.

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Feeling dissatisfied, however, never really made me want to be somewhere else or do anything else – on the contrary, the bigger problems I see, the harder I try. I try to treat every flaw positively, as an area of potential improvement.

I believe it is the verve and the hard work that helps us evolve as artists. Being exposed to every day critique through the Internet opens our minds towards our art as well as ourselves. The more we understand our weaknesses, the quicker we learn how to overcome them. Whether someone uses this knowledge to their advantage or breaks down is an individual matter, but it is in the toughest times when we should work the hardest.

Those are some very wise words – I think we could all do with some of that mentality from time to time, no matter what field or industry we are working in! Okay, so to round up, can you perhaps tell us a little about what we can expect to see from you in the near future, in terms of projects, publications etc.? And my final question: if you could work on any project, with any artist, what would it be, who with, and why [grins]?
I have spent the past years on intense commercial work and right now I'm slowing down a bit. I still have some illustration projects lined up, including

a few books and a movie; however what I am truly aiming for right now is improvement. For the next few months I would like to experiment with my art a bit and spend some time on anatomy and life painting studies. For the farther future, I have a big dream which I first came up with over two years ago and which I definitely plan to realise one day – releasing a huge tutorial book. I love writing almost as much as I love painting, and combining those passions in one huge creation would be truly fulfilling!

If I was to choose a dream project to work on, it would probably be character designing for a Tim Burton movie. Burton is one of my favourite directors; I have been a great fan for a couple of years, admiring his distinctive style and attitude. His touching plot lines combined with dark humour are extremely appealing to me and being a part of his works would simply be a dream come true. If not Burton, I would like to be a part of a project resembling Disney's Fantasia. I find music a great inspiration for my art and life in general, and being able to visually interpret it in a huge project would be a wonderful and most challenging experience!

Thanks so much for this fantastic interview, Marta. We wish you the very best of luck with your future aspirations and we can't wait to see more from you in 2009. Keep up the great work!!

Marta Dahlig

For more work by this artist please visit:
http://www.marta-dahlig.com
Or contact her at:
marta@marta-dahlig.com
Interviewed by: Lynette Clee

At just 22, Jeff's got his foot well and truly in the door of the video game art industry and he's also dipping his toes into film concept art and freelance comics! Read on to find out more about his influences, styles, tips and home city of Vancouver.

JEFFREY SIMPSON

"Right now I'm kinda stuck in this sort of steampunk-surreal-dark-BROMesque phase with porcelain skinned chicks and black drippy stuff everywhere."

JEFFREY SIMPSON

Hey Jeff, thanks for agreeing to do this interview! Let's start out with a bit of general background: where you work, how you got there and what makes you tick?

It's a pleasure to be doing this! I've been doing fake interviews with myself my whole life; it's about time it happened for real! I've always known I've only been good at one thing and that's drawing/creating, so I've never really tried to shoot for any other career. My parents were both artists and were always encouraging me and my brother to draw on that awesome old printing paper, you know the kind with holes on the side?
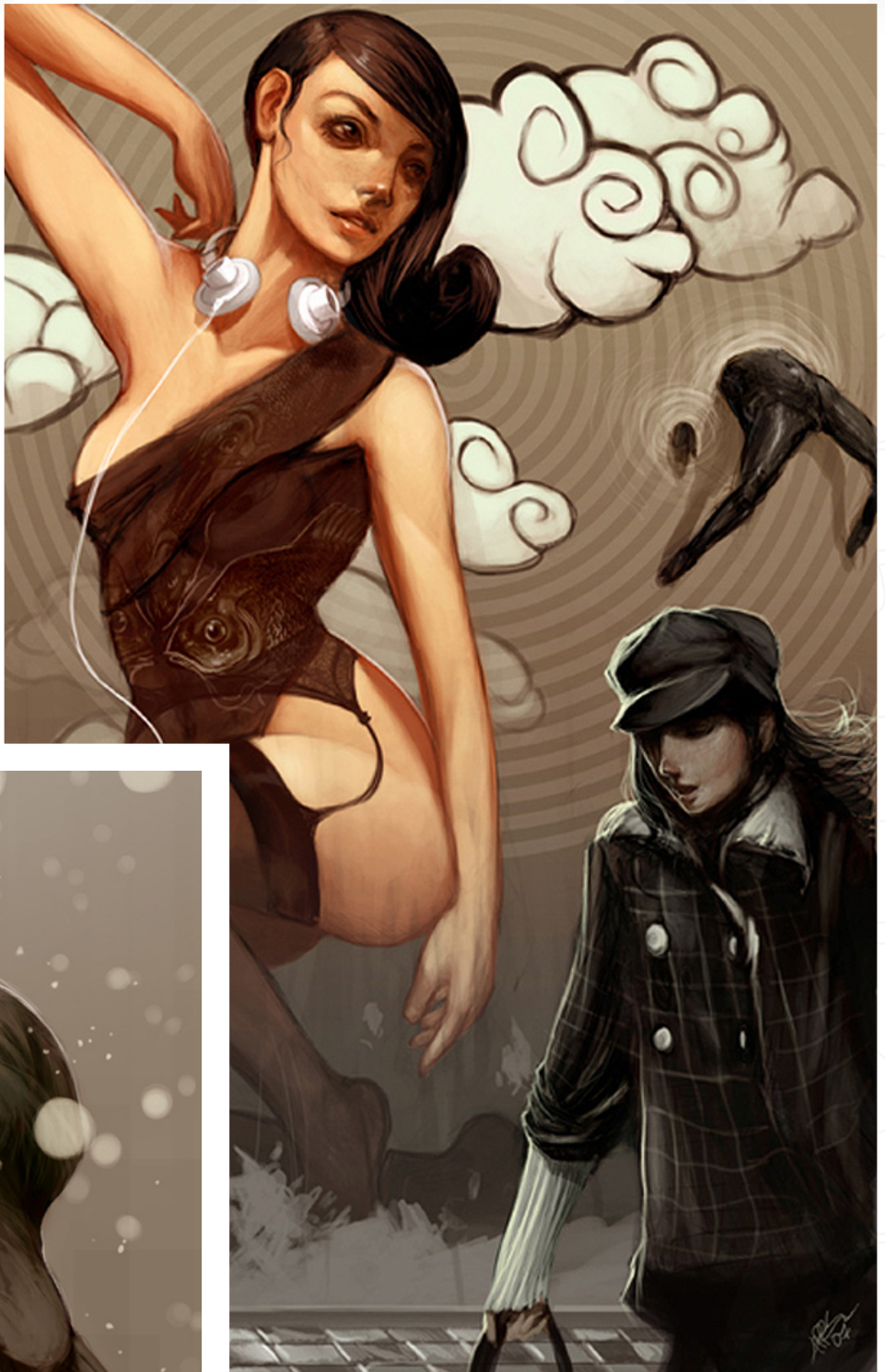
In retrospect all I seemed to draw were war planes and tanks, probably because the gulf war was going on or maybe it was just because my shy, quiet personality was harbouring violence and angst which would be released in embarrassing ways during my awkward 'teens! I eventually made the jump to digital painting when I enrolled in the Emily Carr Institute after I graduated high school. That's where I met my graphite tablet - it was love at first sight. I've since divorced her for a sexy young Intuos though, good riddance! I studied animation and got my Bachelors of Media Arts and made a six minute animated film that I'm embarrassed to show.

Currently I'm working full time as a Concept Artist for Big Sandwich Games, a game studio in Vancouver B.C.; I was lucky enough to get hired shortly after I graduated so I haven't had much downtime since I was about four. I also do freelance in the evening and weekends, usually colouring for comic books and whatnot. I'm currently collaborating on something for Marvel, hopefully I can let everyone know what it is soon ... it's got me pretty stoked!

Married and divorced already, huh? Ever flirt with any other bits of hardware?
Not especially. I'm currently eyeing a Cintiq but my wallet screams at the idea. I'm hoping someone will let me borrow one for maybe an hour or so, so that I can get a feel for it and see if I like it.
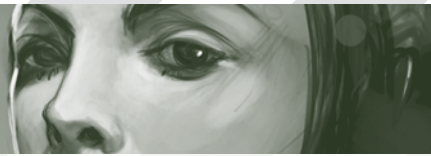
It's either that or a HDTV and Playsation3. Maybe one day I'll have both. Dare to dream, dare to dream!

How's life in Vancouver? It's a city that I have always wanted to visit; is it as fun, fresh and lively as people say?

I love my city. I am a huge fan of overcast days, rain, cold winds, forests and dull beaches. Whenever I'm in inside or out of my native climate I feel sick, tired and gross. But yeah, Vancouver does rock more than any city I've visited, which might not mean anything since I haven't really left the west coast that much. It is lively and fun and super-clean... although this all comes at a price of being extremely expensive to live in. Plenty of great sushi places though, Kampai!

Sounds good to me! Is it a fairly healthy and sporty community you have there?

We live in a crazily healthy city - lots of mountains and trails to walk/run/bike/climb up and seas to swim in. We're intro sports too, as long as you don't talk about our brief stint in the NBA... They were still a blast to go watch though when I was a kid. At least our hockey team does alright (....actually, not really).

There are a lot of girls in your gallery, some of them classically beautiful and some of them …er, a little mixed up. Are they based on any particular people and where do a lot of your ideas for your images come from?

Growing up I was always looking at my mum's Renaissance art books, so I think that I was influenced by their obsession with portraying that kind of

beauty. I won't lie, some of my works are at the very least inspired by people I know, or myself; however a majority of them are just me playing around with aesthetic, mood and atmosphere. I did a poll on my deviant art page recently and was surprised to discover that most of my fans/ watchers were women. This made me feel a bit relieved since I'm always concerned that people are going to see my work as being sexist or offensive. But yes! I need to draw more dudes... eventually...

And how do you find community sites such as DeviantArt? Are they genuinely useful to you or just good for showcasing, socializing and finding girls? [Laughs].
I've been on DeviantArt and other sites for

around five years now and I'd highly encourage people to join as many online communities as they can and be active on them. They're a great way to showcase your work to millions of people; odds are pretty damn good that a few of them will remember you and be pretty useful when it comes to landing a job somewhere! It's also nice (and sometimes horrifying) to look at your online gallery as a whole and see your progression. The people you'll meet are also gonna hugely affect your work; you'll find artists your age who kick the shit out of you and you'll be like "aw damn, I wish I could be that good!" and eventually you will be! Just come up with a more original online name than I did. And as for girls... well, there are other, more efficient, ways to meet them ...

You often paint a character and then also another creature/spirit in the same picture. Can you tell us a little bit about this and the connections you are trying to achieve with these duos?
I think there's just a current trend going on with my "generation" (don't know if that word applies in this case, thanks to the Internet...) to pair up chicks with cute/awesome/bad-ass animals or creatures or robots. I could probably try to squeeze out a more thorough explanation about the appeal of having contrast between savagery and beauty, life and death, love and hate etc. However it's probably much more likely that I saw people doing it, so I started doing it and now it's just a habit.

Yeah, I like the contrast explanation - that makes a lot of sense looking at your gallery. I noticed also that several of your characters are quite stylised - can you tell us a little more about this style of yours?
I think I've gone through a lot of styles over the years. Right now I'm

kinda stuck in this sort of steampunk-surreal-dark-BROMesque phase with porcelain skinned chicks and black drippy stuff everywhere. Can't really explain why; sometimes I'll just happen upon a style and become obsessed with it, until I start noticing it's all I do ... and then force myself to move on. I think my stuff is a bit darker recently because of the project I've been working on at work for the past year is such a colourful, happy, kid-friendly game. It's not exactly my cup of tea, so when I go home I have to spew out all this satisfying darker stuff.

With regards to your work, are you settled in your life or do you have any big plans and ambitions for the future?

If there's anything I'm not good at, it's predicting where I will be the following year. Something always comes up, for better or for worse. It's difficult enough for me to decide on a definitive path, let alone have the ways of the universe come along and do its usual random shit to me. All I know is that I want to be able to express myself, draw whatever I want, and make a living off of it. Right now I'm trying to choose between pre-production/concept art in the game/film industry, the comic industry or the freelance illustrator industry. I'm sticking my toes into each of these large, scary pools simultaneously and I have yet to discover which one will drag me down. I'm relatively young (22... that's still considered young right?) so I'm sure I'll have a bit more time to decide, and it's nice to know it's worked out reasonably well so far.

Yeah you are a young'un (compared to me anyway!) So keeping your options open sounds like the right plan to me. Do any of these industries tend to have greater gains financially or do you think any produce more in a way of satisfaction?

Financially I think the game industry right now is the most profitable, since the game industry here in Vancouver is growing like crazy. The only thing is, I can easily get shoved onto a project I have no interest in. Call me a snob but game art direction needs a lot of work I think, but I can understand why. Companies spend millions of dollars on a game and they're not gonna let an art director go crazy if the only
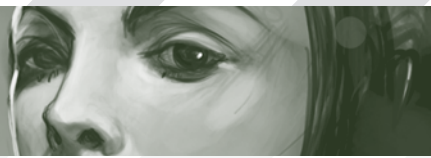
thing that guarantees an income is: "Moms will buy this for their kids Pony Adventure" or "Space Marine Kills Aliens 5: The Bloodshed".

The comic industry looks interesting, but there is so little money/prestige in it. They seem to get really shafted when it comes to getting paid; no one seems to want to acknowledge that what they do actually takes effort... at least, this is what I've been lead to believe thus far. I'll often fantasize about being a straight up visual artist/ illustrator, doing things that "I" want to do and having the industry adapt to me and not the other way 'round. But I lack the confidence and knowledge of the industry to attempt something like that... and I don't like the idea of giving up a salary just yet (especially when my rent is this high!) [Laughs].

Throughout your artistic education and career have you ever been given one piece of advice that made a particular difference to your work? When using Photoshop, work from dark to light, and pretend that the human body has no concave lines. I guess that's two pieces of advice, but they both helped me out a lot.

Hang on! I just checked - I've got some concaves going on (maybe it's a lack of muscles, I'm not sure), and if I didn't, wouldn't I look kinda round? Is that what you mean!? Oh, yeah it's probably crap but it helps when drawing a figure! It makes things have more weight and dimension.

Yeah, when I actually start to think properly about this advice it does make a lot sense. Well, it's been really great chatting with you Jeff, - thanks again and take care!

Jeffrey Simpson

For more work by this artist please visit:
http://www.surrealsushi.com/
Or contact them at:
jeff_lite@hotmail.com
Interviewed by: Tom Greenway

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We delve into the sketchbook
of Illustrator and Concept artist
Jorge Molina
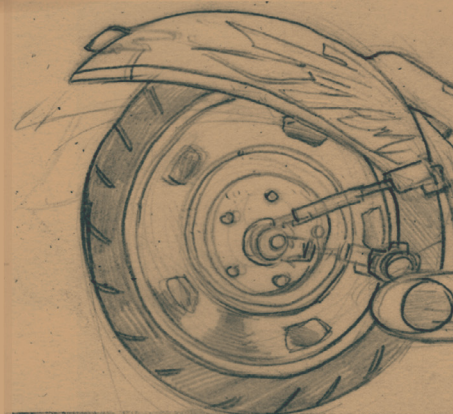
SKETCHBOOK
OF JORGE MOLINA

Famine & Pestilence

These are a couple of concepts I created for a future project. Right now I'm at the fun stage of just brainstorming ideas all over the place.
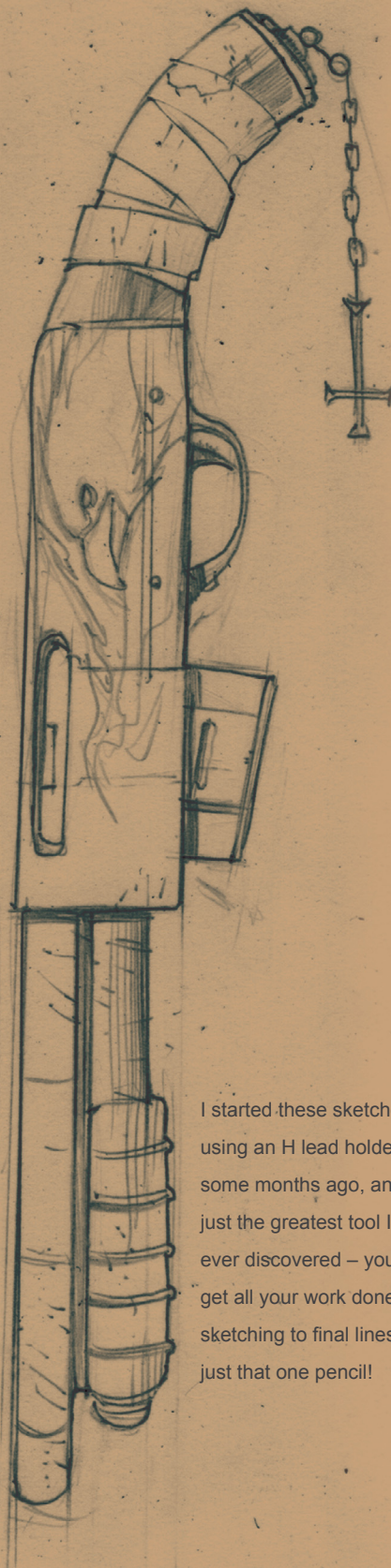
The main concept is "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse"; the writer gave me a description of the characters, like their weight, attitude, and hair colour and so on. From there I just try to picture it all in my head.
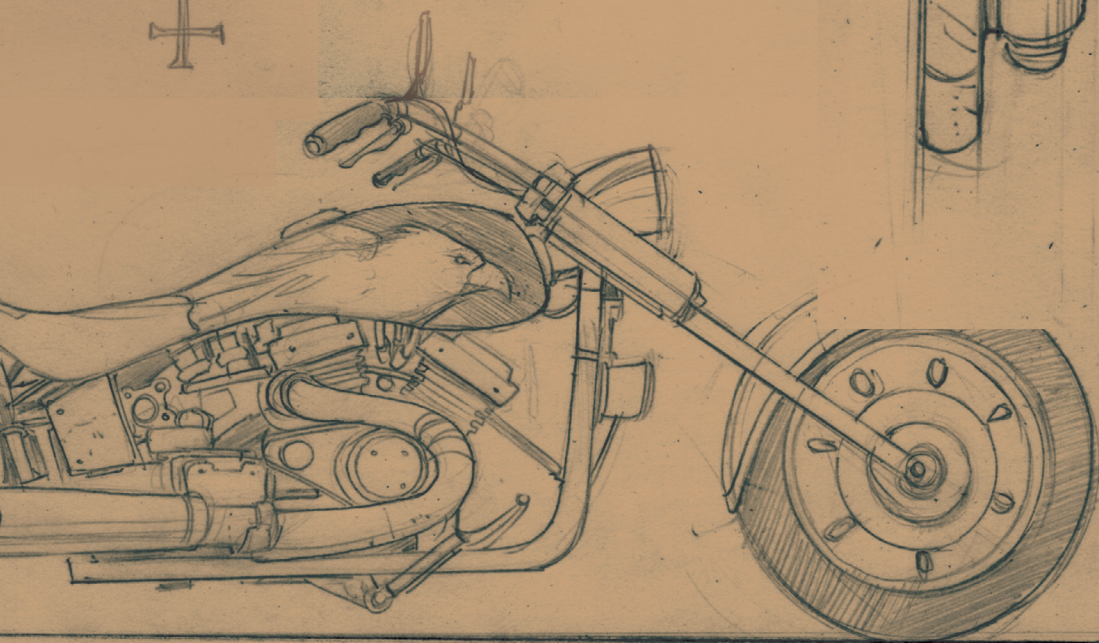
FAMINE

I don't tend to fill my sketchbook pages with sketches, I prefer to do it in my head; once I have a solid idea of what I want, I start sketching.

I started these sketches using an H lead holder pencil some months ago, and it's just the greatest tool I've ever discovered – you can get all your work done from sketching to final lines with just that one pencil!

PESTILENCE

I always try to nail the pose, keeping in mind the attitude of the character. With Pestilence I tried to portray him as a sneaky, dangerous fella – kind of like The Joker, but deadlier and more twisted.

LIVE FAST DIE NEVER
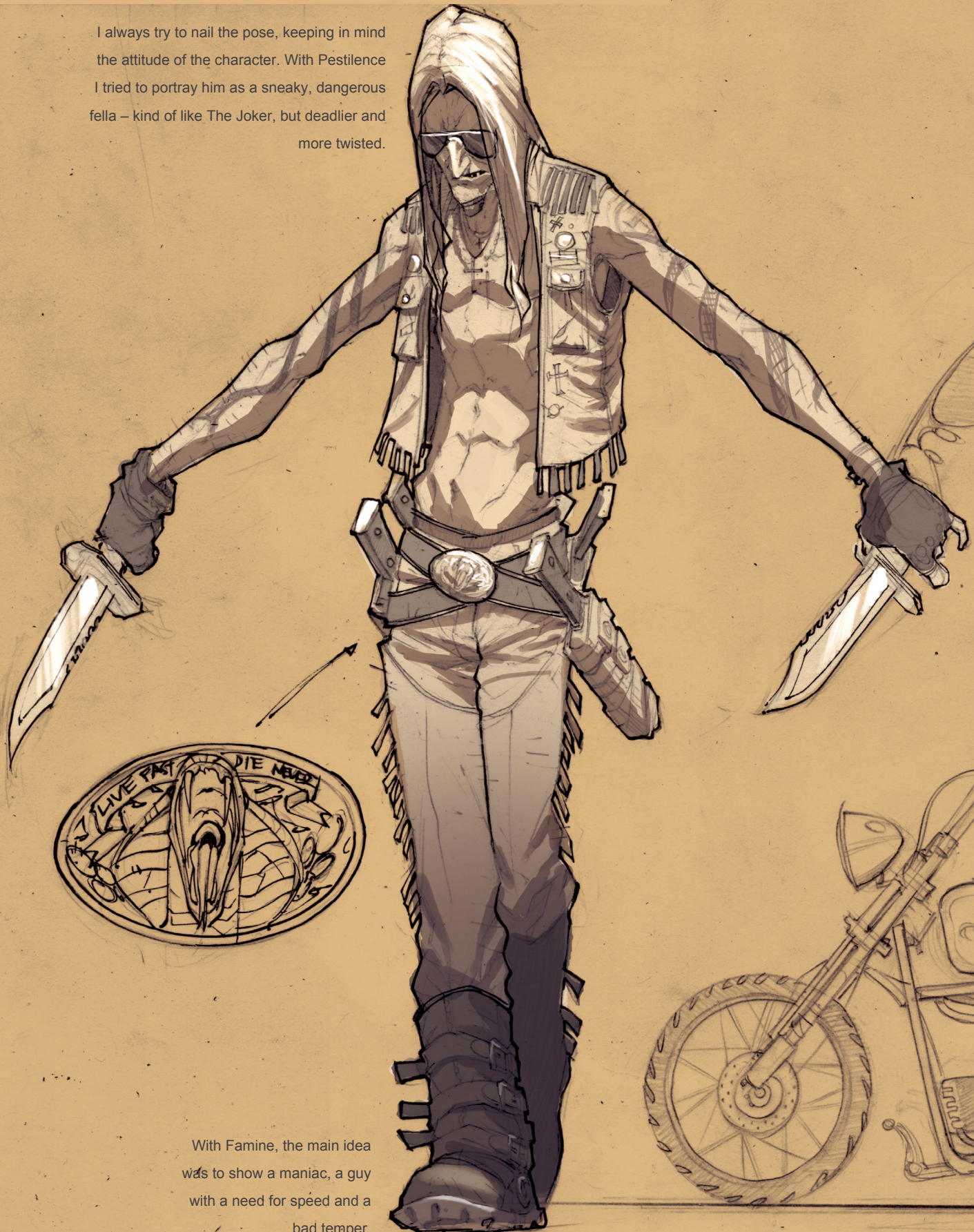
With Famine, the main idea was to show a maniac, a guy with a need for speed and a bad temper.

Once I'm happy with my concepts I start
nailing the props, like weapons and bikes.
At this point I just Google-searched a bunch
of Harley motorbikes for reference, and
simply tried to match a perfect fit for each
character's attitude.
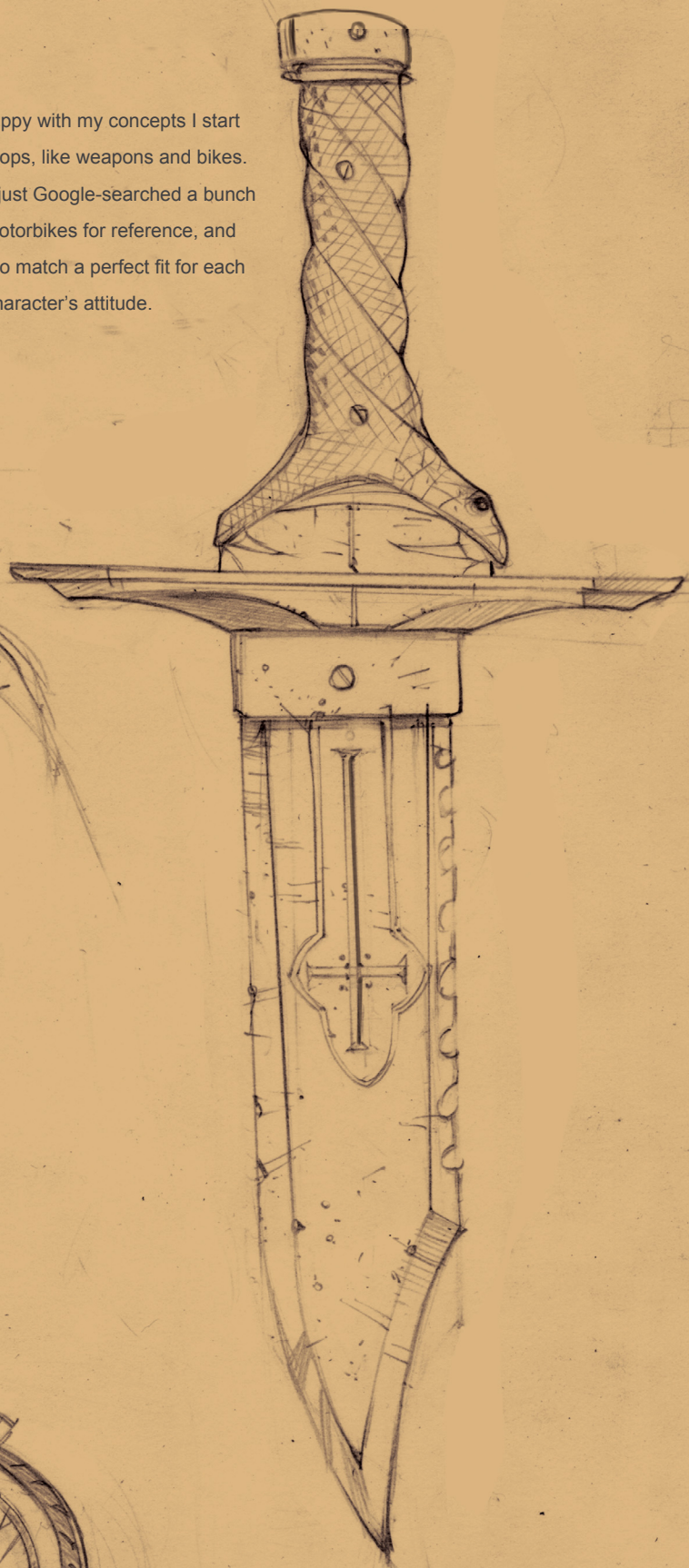
I'm still not 100% happy with the Pestilence bike,
but Famine's bike is much closer to what I had in
mind. After I'm done with the model sheet I just go
to Photoshop and make the final touches, such as
shading and lighting.

SID & CF-39

SID & CF-39

These are some concepts I'm developing for a personal project that I hope will see the light one day. Basically, I wanted to show this dynamic duo of a kid and his robot friend (how original? I know!).

Again, with a clear idea about Sid, I was happy with the character design from the first attempt … although I'm still not too sure about the robot.

This concept is quite a challenge since I want to portray a buffed robot that looks dangerous and cool, but at the same time a friendly dude who can express emotions. This is just the tip of the iceberg, since I have to keep exploring the characters much more deeply. But it's a good start and I think it nails the main concept right away.

Sketch Book of Jorge Molina
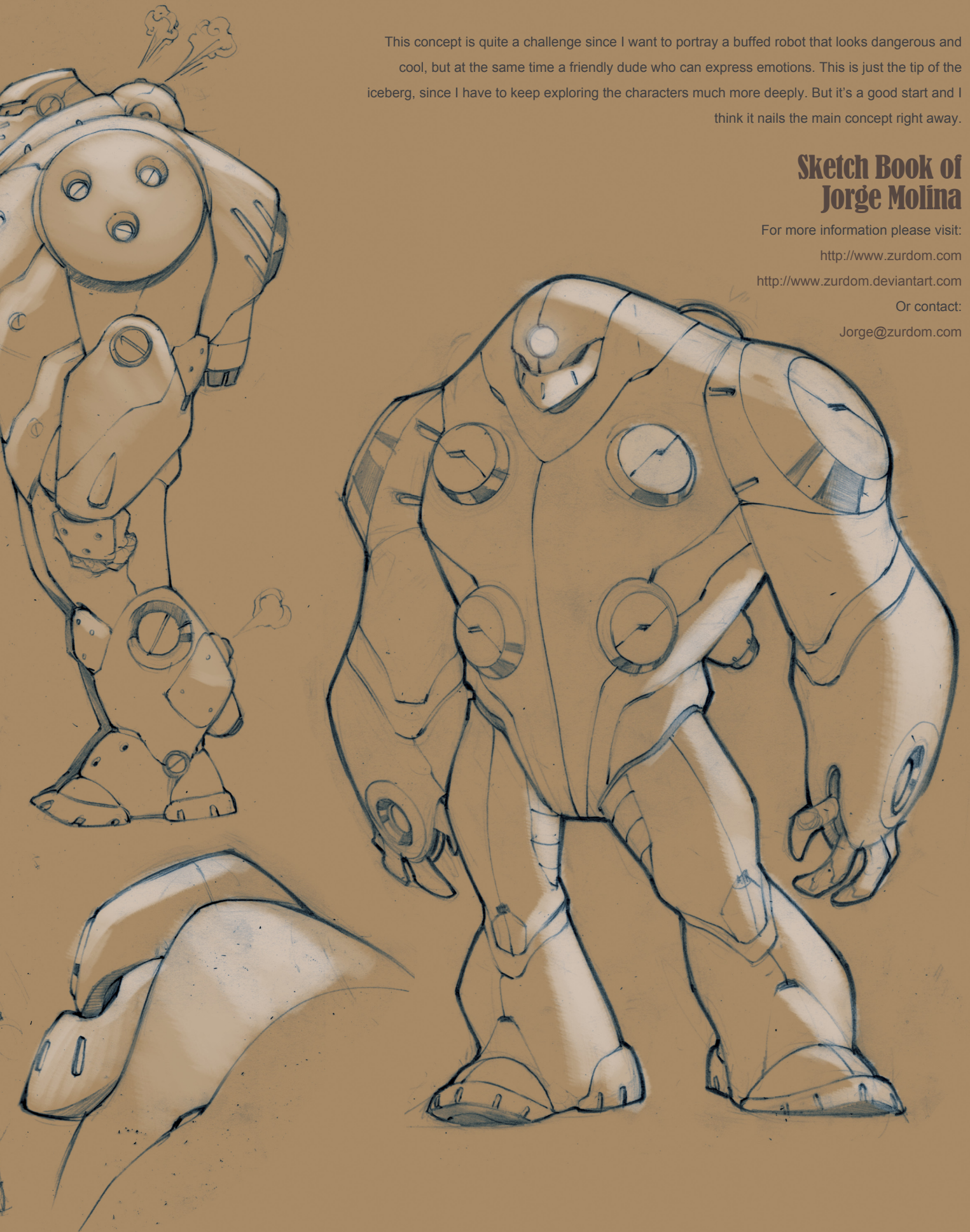
Digital Painting Tutorial EBook

Introduction:

The Painting Armour eBook is a 39-page guide on how to tackle the subject of painting convincing armour. The eBook specialises in creating Medieval, Roman and Samurai armour. We asked industry professional Mike Lim (aka Daarken) to create easy-to-follow guides/tutorials on how to paint these types of armour, and as well giving expert tuition, Mike Lim has also supplied the brushes that he used, which can be downloaded at the beginning and end of the tutorials.

Chapter 01: Medieval
Chapter 02: Roman
Chapter 03: Samurai

painting armour

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DOCTOR GRORDBORT

AN INTERVIEW WITH GREG BROADMORE

Greg Broadmore is the creator and lead designer of the Dr Grordbort's Infallible Aether Oscillators Raygun collectible range. He is also a Senior Conceptual Designer at Oscar-winning film FX facility Weta Workshop, a painter, sculptor, musician, writer, grazer and video game ace. He likes robots, dinosaurs and Rayguns. A colleague of his thought she'd take an hour out from her usual day to ask Greg a few questions about his philosophy on life and work, on behalf of 2DArtist Magazine...

DOCTOR GRORDBORT

AN INTERVIEW WITH GREG BROADMORE

Hi, I'm Linda. Thank you, Greg, for meeting with me today. Where are we exactly and what are you doing right now?

We are on the roof of Weta Workshop in Miramar, Wellington, New Zealand. It's a beautiful sunny day and we're sitting at a picnic table, next to the design room. I'm drawing a picture of a dragon into the surface of the picnic table, using a screw that I found on the ground.

What's possessed you to do that?

Probably the dragon itself; it's channelling itself through me. I don't know where the dragon spirit comes from, but I imagine that it is a long dead dragon that's making its way through my hand onto the surface of this table.

Yep, okay. And are there any other reasons, do you think, why you're scraping an image of a dragon into this picnic table with a screw?

Well, I think – just putting the dragon possessing me idea aside, even though it's obviously the most likely reason for this – I think it's probably because this table has no graffiti on it whatsoever, and that to me is disgusting, considering where this table is. It's right next to the Weta design room. We have paid

DOCTOR GRORDBORT'S TESTIMONIALS

Col. Jack W Phillipson

Copyright Weta Workshop and Greg Broadmore 2007

designers and illustrators coming out here for lunch everyday and not one of them has the wherewithal, the gumption, the moxie, to draw something interesting for me to look at it. This table is perfectly unmolested.

When did you start drawing?

When I was about three. Yes, I was three years old. I don't know what made me draw. You get a crayon and some cardboard and you start drawing. I would get these huge pieces of cardboard from my grandfather and I would draw massive scenes of tanks and soldiers and

WWI and WWII craziness – hundreds of tanks and hundreds of soldiers and explosions and shit like that. And these were all stick figures. My soldiers were running around with guns and shooting each other with lots of little dash lines until the explosion lands on the other end. So it was almost like you were acting out the battle.

Did anyone encourage you with your drawing?
Yeah. My family ... I don't know. This is going to sound negative, but it's not: my mum was a really big influence, not in the sense of encouraging me, but in the sense of never discouraging me. She let me do my thing and never criticised it or made me think: you have to stop doing that and do something sensible now. I was never for want of the tools to make art, but it's not like I was getting a lot of encouragement either. It's weird. I actually view that as a massive positive. Just letting me do it and not being critical of it.

What did your parents do?
My dad was a truck driver and still is, pretty much, and my mum was whatever was interesting to her at the time. Mainly she was a mum. My full brother is a truck driver as well. And my other little brothers don't have jobs yet and probably never will because they're little good-for-nothings. [Laughs] I joke.

Did they give you the tools to paint, or did you have to scrounge around?
I would just do it with whatever was available. I didn't have early access to paints or anything like that. I just had to get those things where I could. I started painting when I got to high school, because all of a sudden, they were giving me paint for free. Even though it was the shittest paint available, suddenly I had paint, whereas previously there was no way I could afford to go and buy paint.

Did you study art after school?
I tried to. I tried tertiary study and it didn't pan out. I didn't think it was getting me anywhere. I didn't like it.

But you like drawing. Why?
Whenever I think about this stuff, I always decide it's the same thing I've always liked

about it. The earliest memory I have is drawing those stick figure battles and I remember thinking and learning certain techniques. Like the day I drew a line through a circle head and – suddenly – I had created a British soldier with a WWI helmet. And the same thing happened with a German helmet; I thought: What if I do a zigzag to the line, like an S - it'll look German. But more importantly, I also remember the day when I realised you could make two hands stick forward, plus one horizontal line with two vertical lines – now I had a machine gun! Now my soldiers were running around with machine guns and shooting each other!

I'm still drawing all the same things; stick figure soldiers just with more advanced techniques.

DOCTOR GRORDBORT'S TESTIMONIALS
Donovan Goldwater Esq.
AKA
"Shufty Five Fingers"
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Dr. Xhislby Exley PhD
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DOCTOR GRORDBORT'S TESTIMONIALS
Counter Vice Colonel, Minor,
Rottingbottom IX
retired
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DOCTOR GRORDBORT'S TESTIMONIALS
Augustus P. Harrison
OBE, VC & Bar
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Do you still find that you discover new designs by experimenting like that?
Yeah, totally. That's how it generally tends to work. You just draw and then new forms and shapes and ideas kind of emerge from that and you exaggerate or intuitively pick the ones that work the best, or the ones that you like the best, and they coalesce into something that lasts and can be re-used in the future.

So what's your usual illustrating process?
At the moment, it's starting with a pencil sketch, although not always. It depends. After I've scanned the sketch into a computer, I open it

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up in Photoshop and start putting in shades and colour and texture. And it just goes backwards and forwards from there.

Is the sketch a substantial part of the process?
Sometimes – and that's when I really spend a lot of effort making the sketch as meticulous as possible. But I actually find that when I do a really loose sketch that quite often ends up becoming the better illustration.

"You know the illustration isn't really working. You're kicking yourself trying to figure out what you can do … And I think, what are you doing, you moron? You're not happy with the illustration. And that's not going to change when you're just zoomed in on his nostril."

Why do you think that is?
I don't know. It's possibly got to do with the fact that the lines end up dictating too much of the image. Where the lines are vague you are forced into the situation of getting more imaginative. In a way, when you do a really detailed pencil sketch, a lot of the creativity is already used up in that initial stage, whereas when you leave it loose in the start, you're leaving more of a creative discovery of the illustration to later on in the process.

DOCTOR GRORDBORT'S
TESTIMONIALS
Stella Lexiphon
Copyright Weta Workshop and Greg Broadmore 2007

And does that "creative discovery" continue through the process?
Yeah. When I'm illustrating, I try to force myself to have a mental outlook of: Don't be afraid to make a big change a long way into the illustration. Quite often it's really counter-intuitive. The further you get into an illustration, the more finished it is, the more refined it is, the less big moves you want to make to it. And quite often you know it really needs it. You know the illustration is not really working. You're kicking yourself trying to figure out what you can do.

DOCTOR GRORDBORT'S
TESTIMONIALS
Capt. Clive Karlinio
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And I notice that in my own behaviour, I'll be unhappy with it, and I'll sit back and consciously look at what I've done, and find I've actually zoomed right in and I'm painting some tiny little detail. And I think, what are you doing, you moron? You're not happy with the illustration. And that's not going to change when you're just zoomed in on his nostril.

Some of the best illustrations I've done, especially concept work, is when I've been really angry in the illustration and I've done the equivalent of taking the illustration out to the back of the bike sheds and I've beaten the shit out of it. I've just decided to change it completely.

Do you draw into it, the existing one, or do you just scrap the image completely?
Because it's Photoshop, it's as destructive or non-destructive as you want it to be. You could leave the old illustration and save it and make a new file and do your new shit on that. That's not how I tend to work. I'm not sure why, that might just be my nature. But I tend to just work straight into the existing illustration.

Do you use photographic elements in your artwork?
No, I don't use photographic elements other

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Sarahna Truelight
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TESTIMONIALS
Admiral Sir Yakov Czedos
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LORD COCKSWAIN'S

MARVELOUS INTERPLANETARY EXCURSIONS

A Popular Illustrated Journal for Boys and Girls on the Exploits of the Famous Naturalist and Explorer

"My equipment in good order and my ship the *Endangerer*, prepped and ready to go, we set off for Venus!
That festering boil on the solar systems posterior. What perils may await, what nightmarish creatures may I discover and what did I pack for lunch? Jam and scones as it turns out."

than textures in my personal work. I prefer to and I always enjoy it more when I create everything in the image.

I use photographic textures, because I like the way they look, but I don't apply them in the normal sense. For instance, I wouldn't necessarily apply a photographic text of fabric to actual fabric. I would be more inclined to take a texture of rock, or some rusty texture or wood and apply it to the entire image, as if it's like you're painting on that surface. It's this kind of thing that makes it feel more natural, and sometimes those accidents, like little bits of texture popping out, just draw your eye out to things and let you accentuate things.

The pallet that you use, do you create your own?
I just make that up as I'm going. Usually, I'm pretty monochromatic. It depends. At the moment it's very monochromatic because the latest book is like a faux action annual, such as an old Tiger or a war hardcover. It's all WWI-inspired antics on Venus and in our solar system, so it's all shades of brown. That'll probably change as I get further into the book.

With colours in general, I just tend to make them up as I go. Quite often what I do is grade

the image at the end as well. Photoshop is awesome for that. There are several different ways of tweaking the entire image or just part of the image to change the colour grade so that your shadows or dark tones are potentially cooler, or warmer or redder, whatever. You can really tweak it and make it crazy. Again it helps if the image isn't working; I suddenly change the colour grading and it brings things out that I hadn't noticed before.

Is it something you experiment with throughout, or do you only grade it at the end?
I keep on changing the grade all the time, all the way through, trying to find something new in the image to work with.

In terms of drawing, do you have a preference for digital – like Photoshop – or painting?
I spend most of my time in Photoshop. There are all sorts of tools in Photoshop; lots of

"Landing, I enlisted the services of a homeless savage and set out"

"His name, some unpronounceable muck, I dubbed him..."

"...M' Gulu."

buttons. I mash all the buttons and a pretty picture comes out.

You are a conceptual designer at award-winning film FX facility Weta Workshop. How would you describe doing concept work for the film industry?

Well, for one thing – compared to a normal illustration – you have to be much quicker. You've got to do as many as you can in as short a time as possible. You're trying to communicate a broad idea and not necessarily go into detail.

Does that depend on which part of the concept process you're in?

Yeah, definitely. At the start of the concept process for a movie, or for a particular part of a movie, you're just doing as many ideas as you can and not necessarily detailing them a great deal. But as you get further into it, as the director is selecting or focusing in on certain parts and designs, then you start to detail more and more - and of course you get to a point when the design is approved and then you've actually still got more work to do. You've got
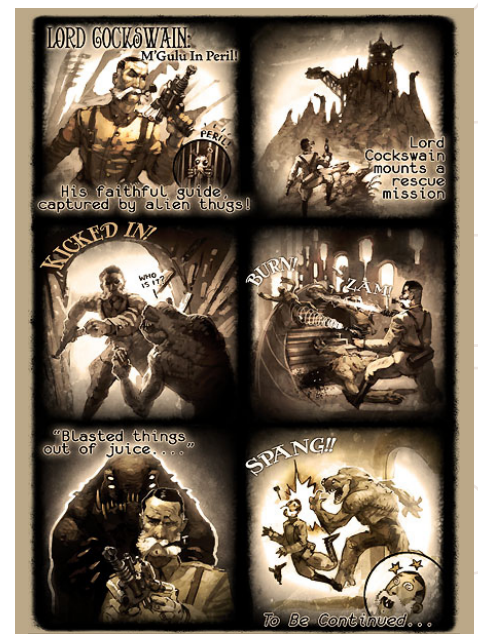
to try and resolve the design in a way that someone can actually build from it, whether that be a digital model or physical model.

Do you have to design with that end product in mind?

You try not to at the start. At the start, you're trying to cast the net as wide as possible. When you're concept-designing for film you have to think: What's the coolest possible thing that you can imagine happening here? What has no one else thought of? And then you retroactively fit that to a way of building it, of trying to make it practical after the fact. Which is tricky.

Sometimes the best designs have come from props builders, model makers and sculptors who have had to build with the end result in mind, because they're building with the tools and directed mind-set that it takes to finish the job. But as a conceptual designer you don't have to worry about that. There are no constraints. You can imagine as crazy a thing as you like and you just have to solve the practicalities of it further down the line. That's obviously cool because you can end up with ideas that are so much more farfetched than if you were always having to take that practicality into account. Part

of the fun of concept design is creating a bunch of problems that someone else is going to solve down the line. That's part of the challenge and enjoyment.

Do you work closely with the people who end up building the design?
Yeah. 99% of what we design here is then also built here at Weta, either by someone digitally or physically building it. I then take the role of art director in order to make sure it comes out as close to what I had imagined as possible. And part of that is a huge compromise, because

you're now trying to make practical, real-world techniques fit a fantastical design – and to a budget. You have to try and make it affordable. And of course you're designing something that's not going to be cheap. It's going to be ridiculously expensive. You've got to figure out how you can make this ridiculously expensive thing affordable to make. How you can make this mammoth thing possible in the real world.

Do you get to put your hand up for the kinds of things you'd like to design on upcoming films?
Yeah. We do. We have that freedom quite a lot.

What kind of films do you tend to go for?
Generally, I would tend to go for stuff that's creatures, or robots or equipment, vehicles, space crafts, weapons and armour. But the only film I've worked on for ages is *District 9* (in production), because it really appealed to me.

What directors have you enjoyed working with?
I've only been at Weta for six years, so I haven't worked with that many. But I've really enjoyed working with Peter [Jackson] and Neill [Blomkamp].

Peter is one of those guys who likes to start off with a loose, scatter-gun approach. He wants to see tonnes of ideas, but more importantly, he's a guy that's into fantasy and science fiction. His movies pretty much always have fantastical visions in them, so you can't really go wrong working for Peter, because you know that the sky's the limit. He's going to do something huge. Whether or not I agree with him creatively is beside the point; you know that working on his films gives you huge creative potential. He is a creative visionary who executes projects on an immense level.

And for me personally, Neill is the first filmmaker that's come along – in my limited experience anyway – where I've gone, shit, what an amazing idea for a film. This is going to stand out. I don't know if it's going to be good. I don't know if it's going to be bad. But I've never seen anything like it before. So it's super-exciting.

How does it work when you are working with a client and they come at you with a brief and say "hey, this is what I want you to draw"? Do you work to something in yourself, or are you working to their vision?
That's hard. But I always work to something from myself. It's definitely very tricky because the tighter the brief, the less room you have to move. So the looser the brief, the better, in many ways. But films are ultimately practical. You have to be able to make them, so therefore the briefs are going to tighten. You just hope for the opportunity to be able to explore it creatively at the start. It's all about being creative, in the end. Coming up with cool shit.

This is probably an appropriate time to ask you about your own creation -- Dr Grordbort's Infallible Aether Oscillators. How did this come about?

About ten years ago, I had drawn a bunch of Rayguns and Raygun girls in my sketchbooks. We were going to do T-shirts with them, but we never did that in the end. Then one year, I bought a bunch of canvasses and started painting Rayguns. After that summer I had ten paintings of Rayguns. I showed them to Richard and said that I thought we should make them as collectibles – make them as if they were real.

Tell me about the line. What collectibles do you have so far?

We have the first three life-size Rayguns – the Manmelter, F.M.O.M and Goliathon 83 – which all came out last year. They're super heavy and limited to 500 of each edition and we've sold over 1000 of those. We have miniatures of all of those for pauper and low types, like me. Coming up in the New Year we have the Victorious Mongoose, which is ever-so slightly smaller than the first three guns. It's good for girls (and boys with small hands). And we're just about to release the Ray-Blunderbuss, otherwise known as "The Unnatural Selector".

The Unnatural Selector?

That's our massive gun, our massive rifle Raygun. It's Lord Cockswain's gun of choice. So now for a small sum of money, for a piffling sum of money, you can purchase one. You'll be dead in seventy to a hundred years. And if you haven't bought a Raygun, but you have bought an AbFlex, your life has been wasted. Better to have bought a Raygun than to have bought a George Foreman Grill!

What would I do with it?

You would either a) put it on your mantelpiece and impress your friends and relatives or b) run around the house and play soldiers or c) attempt to rob a bank with it and get killed and/or put in jail.

Would you have one?

I want one. Of course. I want one on my wall. But we're only making 50.

Why only 50?

Because it's crazy. 50 pretend guns is nuts. 50 is about the amount of crazy people in the world that I thought would buy it. I knew there was me. I knew I would want one. And I hoped there would be 50 other human beings who thought that owning a pretend Raygun would be good.
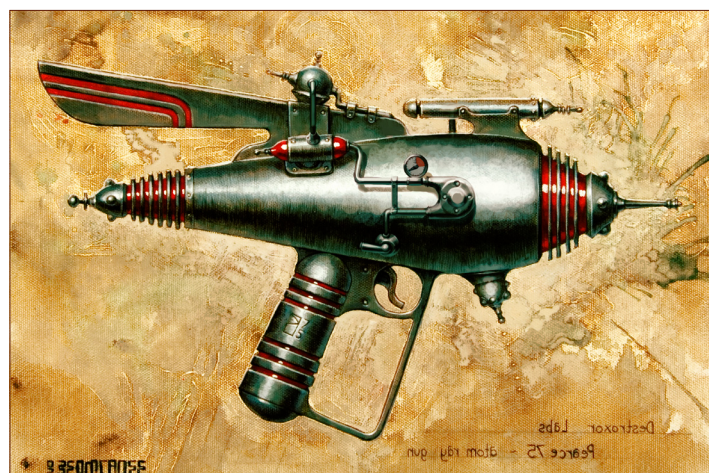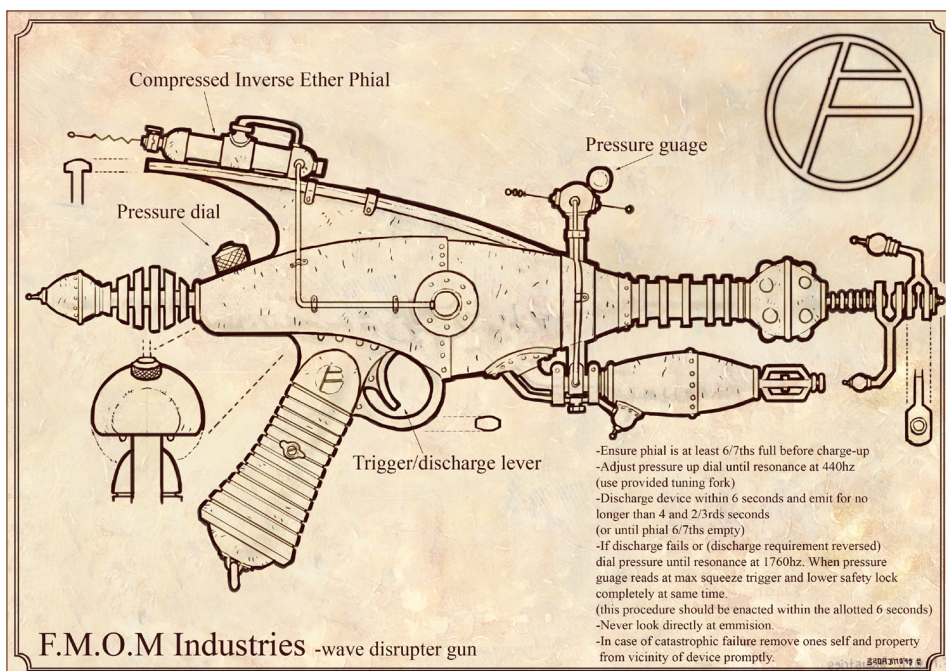
"Weta Workshop technicians are like Santa's elves covered in grime. They toil away down in the workshop, which is basically like the design room but much dirtier, and there's slime down there. And they talk in slovenly accents."

And it seems to be going well, doesn't it?

It is. Well, there are at least another 30 or so people so far, in the first month of going on sale, that feel the same way I do. Seems good to me.

You designed them. Who's building them?

The goodly Weta Workshop technicians are making these now. Those same folk who made all the props and armour and weapons and miniature sets on *The Lord of the Rings* and *King Kong*. They are beavering away right

Threaded Knob
Adjustable Dial
Two Stage Switch
Spring Loaded Trigger

Goliathon 83

Goliathon 83
—infinity beam projector

F.M.O.M. Ind
Wave Disrupter Gun
Pressure Guage
Analog Slider
Threaded Log
Adjustable Valve Knob
Spring Loaded Trigger
Air Pressure Tube

Compressed Inverse Ether Phial
Pressure guage
Pressure dial
Trigger/discharge lever

F.M.O.M Industries -wave disrupter gun

-Ensure phial is at least 6/7ths full before charge-up
-Adjust pressure up dial until resonance at 440hz (use provided tuning fork)
-Discharge device within 6 seconds and emit for no longer than 4 and 2/3rds seconds (or until phial 6/7ths empty)
-If discharge fails or (discharge requirement reversed) dial pressure until resonance at 1760hz. When pressure guage reads at max squeeze trigger and lower safety lock completely at same time. (this procedure should be enacted within the allotted 6 seconds)
-Never look directly at emmision.
-In case of catastrophic failure remove ones self and property from vicinity of device promptly.

Destroxor Labs
Pearce 75 - atom ray gun

now, down in the dungeon below us. Weta Workshop technicians are like Santa's elves covered in grime. They toil away down in the workshop, which is basically like the design room but much dirtier, and there's slime down there. And they talk in slovenly accents.

Do you have any sort of criteria you have to fulfil whilst coming up with the designs for your Rayguns?

My only criteria is that they appeal to me. It's kind of intuitive or instinctual; I don't analyse it too much. I do want them to look convoluted, like prototype weapons. A part of the feel and mythos behind them is that they are contraptions, potential death traps. They look like they could level a house, but you'd be taking your life in your hands.

DR. GRORDBORT'S
INFALLIBLE ÆTHER OSCILLATORS

Lord Cockswain's

'The Unnatur

🪲 A WETA OR

DR. GRORDBORT'S
INFALLIBLE ÆTHER OSCILLATORS

LORD COCKSWAIN'S
"THE UNNATUR

The guns are just a part of something much larger. There is a whole world catalogued, from inhabitants to a rundown of creatures that inhabit Venus. Was this something planned from the beginning or did this element evolve as you went on?

The world of Dr. Grordbort's is definitely something that has grown over time. The look and feel and the themes, if that's the right word, were established pretty quickly - while I was designing the guns, in fact. But it's a world that continues to evolve and develop as I gain new opportunities. It's always been a world that's ripe

for exploring with different characters, and that's something I'm excited to show people as we go forward with it.

What exactly is "the world of Dr Grordbort's"? At its most basic sense, it is a retro-futuristic universe as seen through the lens of Dr Grordbort Industries – a global corporation that manufactures weapons – a huge company which is run by a not entirely nefarious scientist called Dr Grordbort. He's slightly eccentric, but not crazy. And he owns a giant company that makes weapons, rocketships and soap.

Ray-Blunderbuss

al Selector'
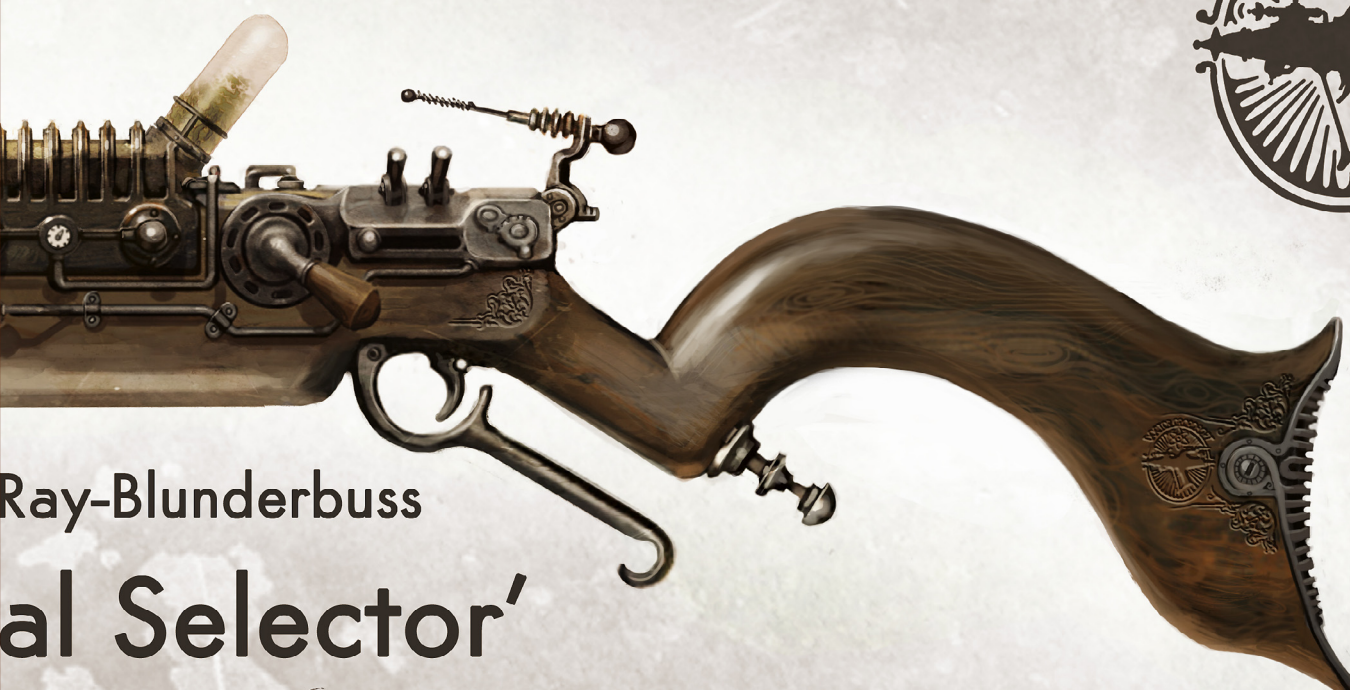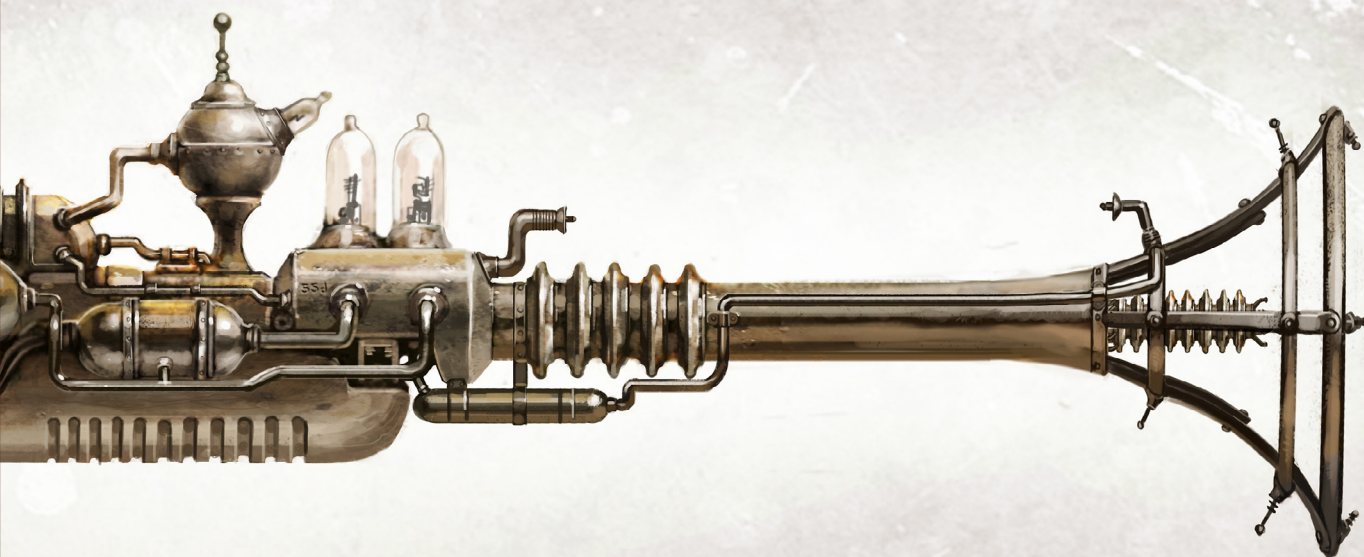
RIGINAL

DOCTOR GRORDBORT

RAY-BLUNDERBUSS
AL SELECTOR''

Dr Grordbort's Number One Patron is this Great White Hunter of a character, Lord Cockswain, who uses the Rayguns manufactured at Grordbort's Laboratories to "explore" the planets, mainly Venus. He shoots a lot of alien animals and he is the main way I explore this world.

You seem to like the odd bit of violence and gore.
Yeah. I guess you could say that. I have a serious in-built fascination with violence.

For instance, even though I'm disgusted by the war that's happening in Iraq, I'll watch Live Leak and watch some pretty intense shit that some part of me is compelled by. And I can't really even explain it. And I don't know if I have to explain it, to be honest. I see the same thing all over the place, in everyone.

Part of it must be the fetishistic appeal of weaponry and the accoutrements of war. I am just fascinated by that stuff. As far back as I can remember, Germans had the coolest looking equipment … and I can remember that as a

DR. GRORDBORT
INFALLIBLE AETHER OS

PRESENTs
A CUT-AWAY OF
THE SATURN 17 RAYGUN

No.2

No.1

No.5

RAYGUNS

No.6
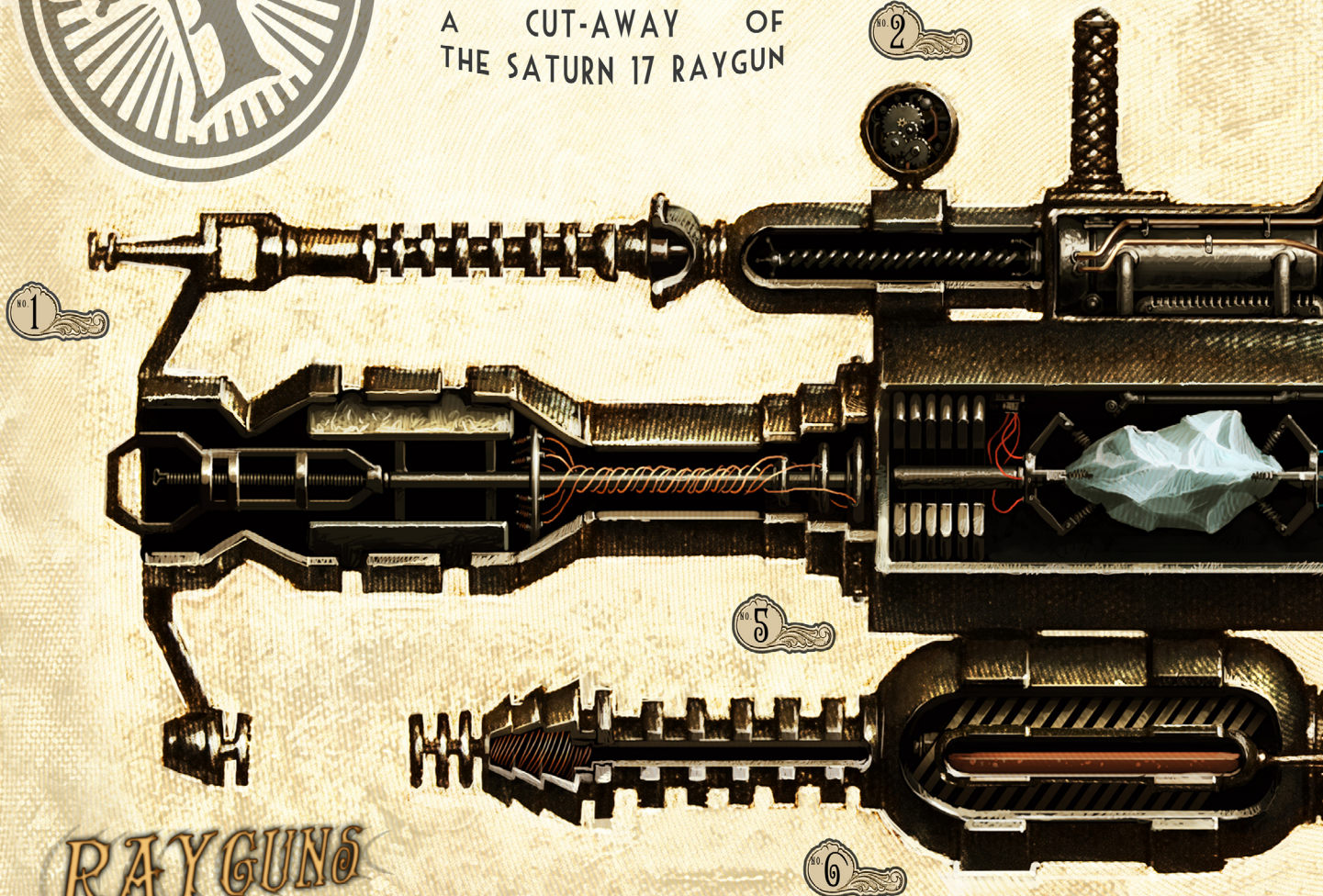
ALSO DESIGNED BY
GRORDBORT'S LABORATORIES:

MANMELTER 3600zx
**Sub-Atomic Disintegrator
Pistol.**
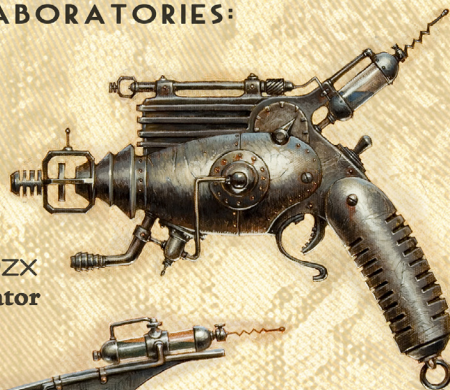
GOLIATHON 83
infinity beam projector
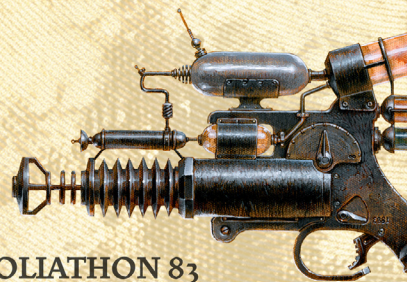
F.M.O.M. Industries
Wave Disrupter Gun

FAHTBAUSS
MODEL 9
-Parallel Phase Inverter-

№ 3

№ 4
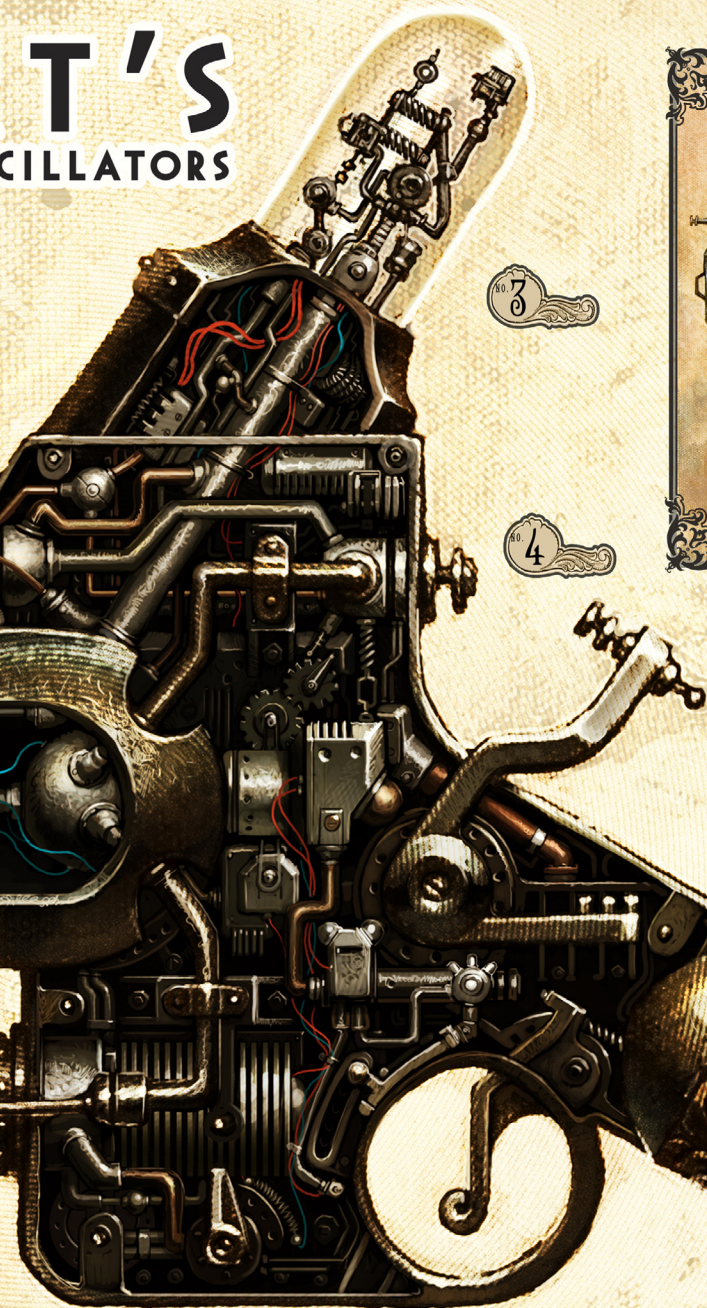
SATURN 17
LUMINIFEROUS AETHER EXCITER

1. Sphagnum Focus Conduit
(Polarises Aether particles into a
negatively inverted phase reversal)

2. Finely Tuned Aether Pressure Gauge
(It's full of scientific looking cogs!)

3. Tobin's Phlange
(makes high pitch whining noise)

4. Adjustable Impedence Lever
(adjusting it makes you look clever)

5. Suspended Crystal
(revered by shrub cuddlers everywhere)

6. Coiled Vibratuliser

7. Southern Polynesian
Carved Handle
(hand whittled by
little old ladies)

№ 7

FATHOM 55 N1900
phlogiston over charger wave pistol

ESTROXOR LABS
...EARCE 75 atom ray gun

VICTORIOUS MONGOOSE 1902a
CONCEALABLE RAY PISTOL

DOCTOR GRORDBORT

kid, I thought the Germans had all the cool stuff. They had the Tiger tanks. They had jack boots. Part of it is that fetishistic appeal and the familiarity of this stuff. I don't know what the other part of it is. There is some inherent attractiveness in war and violence as a young boy. I don't even know why that it is. And I'm vegetarian! I don't even like killing animals. So it's a bit silly.

"Hopefully, anyone creating art, is always wanting to build secondary, tertiary, multiple layers of meaning into it. But most of the time it's hard enough building one layer."

It's clearly a parody, especially when reading the likes of your first book, *Dr Grordbort's Contrapulatronic Dingus Directory*. Is that the purpose of it, or is it just the style?
I think that's just a style thing. I'm just thinking about that now. I didn't set out to make it satirical, but I knew I wasn't going to write it seriously. When I started writing the world of Dr Grordbort, it just came out like that - poking fun at advertising, poking fun at weapons and the fascination with them, and poking fun at the old-world (but still present) ideology of humanity being the top of the food chain, which

Randalls Flutey Buck Buck

Shallow Beaked Grogan

I think is just short-sighted and silly. I don't even know how you take it seriously, which is why it probably happened like that, because I can't help but poke fun at that kind of thing.

I hear you're writing a second book.
Yes, it's the follow up to the *Contrapulatronic Dingus Directory*, and it's set to come out next year. I've only just started and it's going really well. I'm doing a bunch of illustrations that I'm really into. It's an adventure annual. It's the sort of book I would have loved to have read when I was pre-teen, like those old annual compendiums of 2000AD and Commando Comics and all that kind of stuff. Just boys' adventure, war and violence and shooting. Full of pictures of retro-scientific looking war.

How did you first get into retro-Sci-Fi?
I've always been interested in old-fashioned Science Fiction, from as early as I can remember, probably from when I was four or five and watching *Flash Gordon*. One episode in particular has always stuck with me. It's the one where Flash Gordon has a fight with someone on the edge of Bottomless Pit. I remember that very clearly. I thought about it all the time; about what it would be like falling into a bottomless pit. Would you starve to death? I did think about how scary a concept it was fighting at the edge of a bottomless pit. So Flash Gordon left a strong impression. Not long after that, when I was six years old, *Star Wars* came out. I saw *Star Wars* and that was a big deal. That was it. I was into Sci-Fi.

Mumford's Royal Toop

The art work, as well as the guns themselves, portrays an Art Nouveau influence. How did you find mixing this in with the sci-fi element?

The Rayguns are a mix of styles. Art Nouveau as well as Deco, despite their conflicting nature, were inspirational to the aesthetic of the world surrounding the Rayguns. That era of design is perfect for the world of Dr. Grordbort - it always made perfect sense to me.

Outside of your concept art for the film industry and Dr Grordbort's, you do a lot of your own personal illustrations. You seem to like to take already existing visual mythology, and either humanise it, or mess with it.

Yeah, I like characterising non-human characters. Part of it is the mechanics of it. For instance, I like drawing robots from a mechanical point of view and using the mechanics to make something different happen. Quite often the robots that I'm most interested in drawing are humanoid in some way, even if it's only in a broad level.

It's kind of fun making a robot look like a person, you know, making a robot a caricature – where you feel sorry for them, or sympathise with them.

Recently, for myself, I drew quite a chunky looking robot in a room with a computer behind it, with two crappy little dumbbells in its hand. It's the sort of thing that a teenage kid would have in his room, because, you know, you need to have muscles if you're a boy. Must have muscles. Make my biceps bigger so that the girls will like me. Or the boys. And the idea of a robot sitting there doing that, of course it's ludicrous, but I like that. Isn't the goal of robots to make them

human somehow? The aspiration is to build these humanoid automatons. So there's this aspiration to build Golems, constructs, that are faux human. The Japanese are doing it all the time. They build these robots that may have no AI at all, but they're designed to look and move as humanly as possible and have all these subtle body languages. That's just a human fascination, and it's fascinating to me as well, so the idea of having a robot with a body image

Barnaby's Thrusk
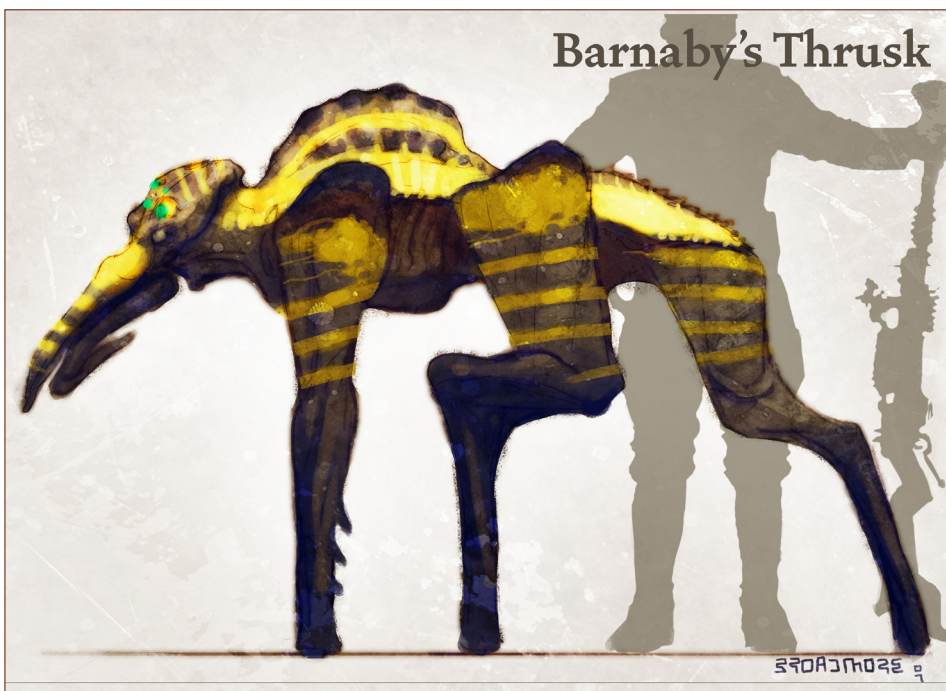
problems that feels it has to pump weights, when really all it's really doing is wearing its arms out – that's kinda funny.

"On a simple level, I like drawing figurative art and if I'm going to draw figurative art, then by golly, I'd rather draw a woman than a guy."

Speaking of funny, I hear you're holding an exhibition of your illustrations of naked women slipping on banana peels in Wellington City's Civic Square over the summer. Do you want to tell me how that came about?
I have a Nintendo DS. I have been through several Nintendo DS's and there's a great program that you can get on that machine called *Colors* by a Swedish gentleman called Jens Andersson. It's very good. It allows you to use the Nintendo DS as a painting tool. So when I went away from Christmas I started drawing naked women falling over banana peels. And I got to 99 and that's all the program memory could hold. And I though, that's enough. That's a good number. And that's how I came up with 99… Dodgy Slips.

Dodgy slips? You mean naked women slipping on bananas.
On a simple level, I like drawing figurative art and if I'm going to draw figurative art, then by golly, I'd rather draw a woman than a guy.

Why?
The shapes seem more compelling to me. I have no idea why, other than naked women's bodies – I like them.

"The hard thing is always coming up with an interesting idea for an illustration. Why is this illustration going to be good to look at? Why is it worthwhile? Why is it worth wasting my time on it?"

Classical art can have all the nudity you like and it's classical, it's tasteful, it's somehow sanctioned by society. You do it in pop art, put naked women in it, and it's not acceptable any more. It's titillating. It's porn. It's base. Which I think is crazy. Because it'll only take fifty years for people to look back on that and say no, it's not base, it's art. It's like naked sculptures in Art Nouveau. I don't actually know what the

outlook was on them. It was possibly looked down upon; I'm going to take a guess. But now we look at them as art. And I suppose part of me was thinking, yeah, this is going to be taken as titillating. Women in classical art are either standing or lying, but if I make them falling over on banana peels, a) I get to draw them in a million different poses and make up the pose every time and b) it's kind giving the finger to the people that think a woman flying awkwardly through the air is titillating.

Do you ever get the blues over your work?
Not recently, but yes, I used to quite seriously. It's very frustrating when the illustration just doesn't come freely or the ideas just aren't interesting enough. The hard thing is always coming up with an interesting idea for an illustration. Why is this illustration going to be good to look at? Why is it worthwhile? Why is it worth wasting my time on it?

You think about these things while you're drawing?
Yeah. Always. Is this worth it? And usually, luckily by the end of it, you go, yeah, cool, this is working. I can't wait to see this when it's finished.

Are you trying to say something with your art?
Hopefully, anyone creating art is always wanting to build secondary, tertiary, multiple layers of meaning into it. But most of the time it's hard enough building one layer. So, I try to give it more meaning.

What artists have influenced you?
Howard Pyle, NC Wyeth, Simon Bisley, William Stout, Mike McMahon, Spielberg and Lucas fundamentally left impressions on me as a kid. James Cameron. Ridley Scott. All of them.

Looking ahead, are there any different art forms you would like to explore more?
If I were to stop illustrating tomorrow, I would go and make music again. I correlate art, music and sculpture very closely, because they're something you can do with your own hands and do with a small group of people to create a cool result. So those are definitely analogous forms of art to me. On an individual, primal level, then music is number one for me.

But there are bigger, more ambitious, forms of art that I want to be more involved with - the main one being video games. But to do something incredibly ambitious you either need a lot of people or a lot of time – plus a lot of money. And more often that not, it's going to be a lot more collaborative process. So that's the type of art that I would like to do.

Do you see there being a Dr Grordbort's video game?

I would love to do a Dr Grordbort's video game and film. They are obviously huge enterprises (or at least they would need to be to fit the mould of Grordbort's which is, by the very nature of it, quite epic.) But if the conditions and situation are right and there is the right creative

partnership, and all the planets are aligned, then it would be great to make a film and game.

"What better thing is there to do, than make up cool shit and get paid for it?"

Is there pleasure in it for someone who lives in New Zealand, in the middle of nowhere – you're not involved in any wars. Is there some kind of gratification in indulging these desires, you think? Do you think your distance from war is helping you to create this clear perspective?
It's definitely given me the outlook I have. I don't know if that's good or bad. But being in NZ is pretty damn sheltered. It's safe.

You like this whole Weta / New Zealand / Dr Grordbort's business?
What better thing is there to do, than make up cool shit and get paid for it? Actually, back to reality, it's pretty damn hot out here. I'm wondering if I'm getting burnt.

Okay, one last question and we can head back inside – Describe an ideal day.
My ideal day… This would be a day when you did lots and lots of illustrating, and you liked all the illustrations that you did; where you got out and you wandered out and about, had good food and got a good night's sleep; where you

MOON MISTRESS
vs METAL MEN
ACTION PIN UP

played lots of *Call of Duty 4* and won every game and made a really good level in *Little Big* Planet and rocked out on Rock Band … and then got lucky.

Thank you, Greg. I think that's everything.
No worries. Thanks.

Greg Broadmore

For more information please visit:

http://www.DrGrordborts.com

http://www.WetaNZ.com

Article courtesy: Linda Hughes

THE GALLERY

WARFARE FIELDS

BUSINESS DISTRICT

This month we feature:
Alexander Yazynin
Sue Marino
Gabriel Vera
Ignacio Bazán Lazcano
Giorgio ucerG
Gonçalo Pereira, aka Rawgon
Gabriel Leonardo Romero
Julia Bax
Kev Chu
Mike Thompson

Nastya

Alexander Yazynin

artist@katauri.com

Karina's Familiar

Sue Marino

http://www.suemarino.co.uk

tncall@aol.com

My Pet Robot

Kev Chu

http://www.bananachu.com

kev@bananachu.com

Shuar's Basement

Gabriel Leonardo Romero

http://gaboleps.blogspot.com/

gabrielromero2285@hotmail.com

Exp 230481

Giorgio ucerG

http://shardana.cgsociety.org

Smooth

Gabriel Vera

http://www.imanimastudio.com

http://cggallery.itsartmag.com/gallery/SteevieWoo/

katt@imanimastudio.com

steeviewoo@yahoo.com

WARFARE FIELDS

BUSINESS DISTRICT

SINGLE BEHEMOTHS IN YOUR AREA

Camila

Gonçalo Pereira, aka Rawgon

outview@hotmail.com

Shaolin Robot

Julia Bax

http://juliabax.blogspot.com

juliabax@juliabax.com

Superbad

Mike Thompson

http://www.miketartworks.com

mike@miketartworks.com

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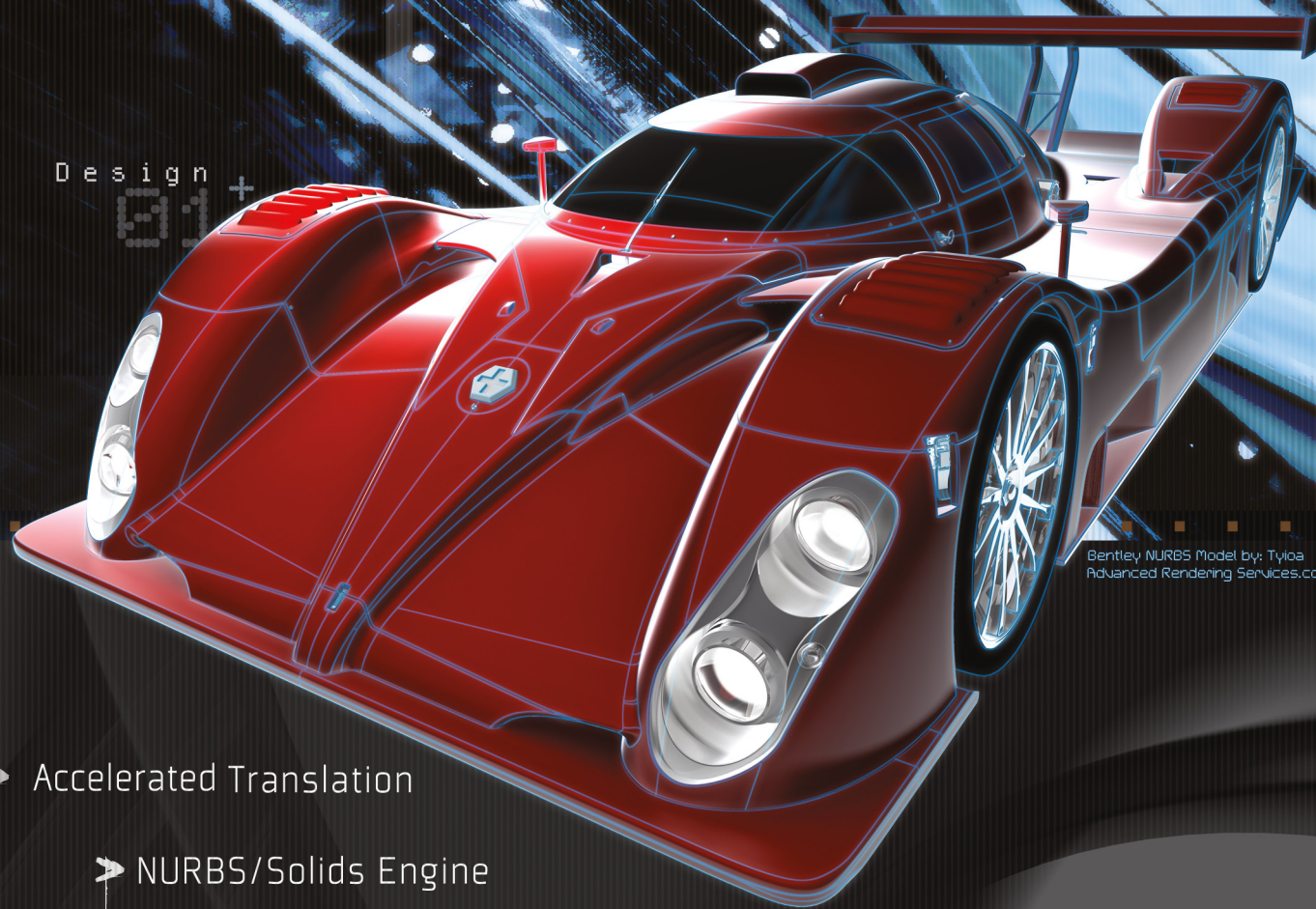
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2DArtist Magazine introduces the "Challenge" section of the mag. Every month we will run the challenge in the conceptart.org forums, available for anyone to enter, for prizes and goodies from www.3dtotal.com shop and to also get featured in this very magazine! Here we will display the winners from the previous month's challenge and the "Making Of's" from the month before that.

Frankenstein

Stylised challenge

In Association with **CONCEPTART** **THREEDY FORUMS**

Stylised Challenge

Frankenstein

The Challenge

Welcome to the Super Stylised Monthly Challenge. Each month we will select an theme and post some images in the **Forum Thread** as reference. All you have to do is to create a 2D image in line with this theme in a stylised / abstract / cartoon style, whilst keeping your image instantly recognisable. We wanted to publish some content in 2DArtist Magazine on how to create stylised images, such as you see in the many feature films and cartoon galleries. We thought this regular competition might bring in just the images / Making Of's that we need,

7th Marcuswelbey

6th Sawa
blog-sawa.blogspot.com
sarina.w@gmx.de

5th Gnahz
http://gnahz.deviantart.com
adrian.zhangzhiwei@gmail.com

4th 28thWing
www.28thwing.com
janos.kiss@28thwing.com

whilst giving away great prizes and exposure. If it's a success we will start to boost the prizes up as much as possible! This month's theme was **"Frankenstein"**. Here you can see the top placed entries, as voted for by the public.

What are we looking for?

Funny and humorous entries which break the theme down to its most recognisable components; emphasise these in whichever ways you think best, and render your stylised / abstract / cartoon masterpiece. The rules are pretty laid back: please submit 1 x 3D render (minor post work is OK); its up to you if you want to have a background; include some graphical elements or text on your image. Renders of the 800 pixel dimension sound about right, but the winners will be featured in 2DArtist Magazine, so if you can create some higher res images too then all the better!

There will be one competition per month, with the deadline being the end of the month (GMT).

3rd Rosatron www.rosatron.com/ rosatron@gmail.com

2nd Paweu pawelsomogyi@gmail. com
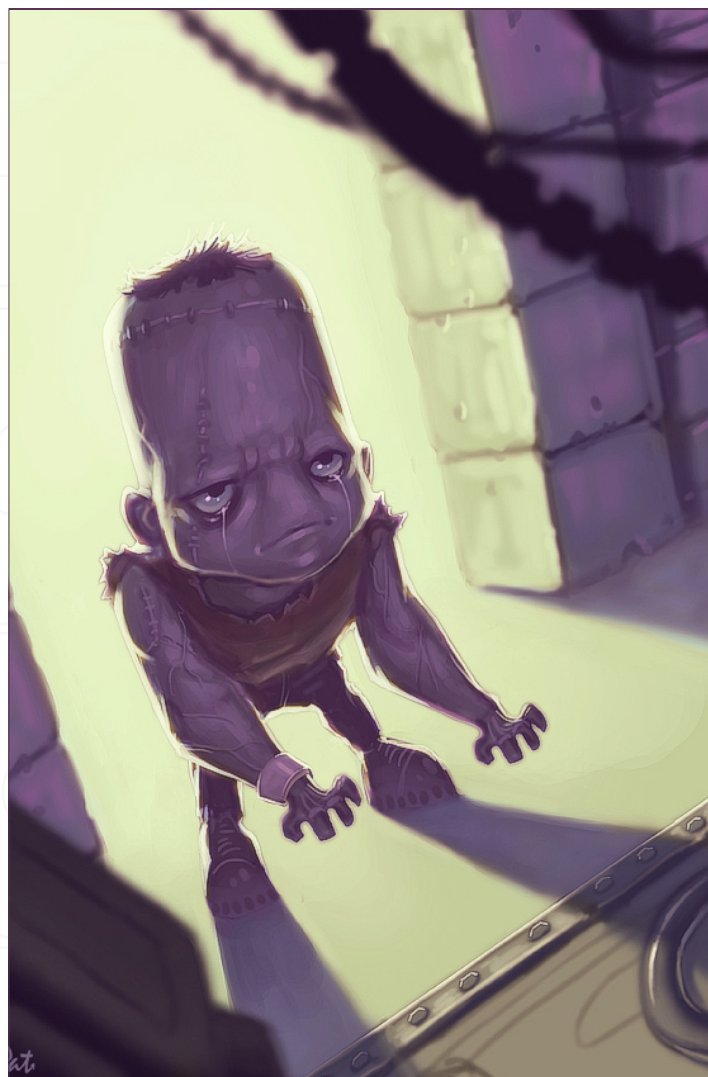
For a valid entry, just make sure your final image is posted in the main competition thread before the deadline. We require the top three winners to submit "Making Of" overview articles that will be shown on either 3DTotal or in 2DArtist Magazine. These need to show the stages of your creation - different elements and some brief explanation text - of why, and how, you did what you did. We will format this into some nice-looking pages to give you some great exposure, and us some quality content. Each competition will have one main thread which starts with the brief at the top. All entrants should post all WIP's, give feedback and generally laugh at the crazy ideas that are emerging each month...

Challenge Thread

The entire Frankenstein competition can be viewed Here

The current challenge at the voting stage is: **Scarecrow**

The current challenge taking place is: **Butcher**

To join the next challenge, or to view previous, and / or current entries, please visit: www.conceptart.org

Or contact: Lynette@zoopublishing.com

1st Chuck,mate http://www.chuckmate.blogspot.com pat2003b@yahoo.com

Making Of's

Here are the "Making Of's" from last month's top three winning entries...

3rd Shatteredfx

Introduction

Hi this is Raffy Dematawaran. I am here once again with another article about the steps involved in the making of this particular piece. This article consists of some snapshots of the work in progress, along with some brief descriptions and explanations.

Step 01

Here is a very rough and loose drawing made in Photoshop (**Fig.01**). I was planning to make a very simple but sturdy and established pose for this warrior, using the background colour, #CCCCCC and #333333 for the brush. I'm a big fan of one of the oldest default brushes in PS;
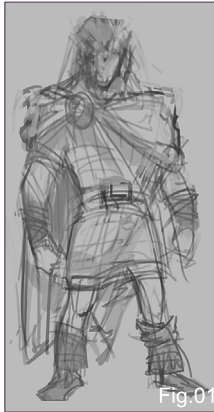
Fig.01

Fig.02

Fig.03

Fig.04a

Fig.04b

you will find its name to be "Hard Round 109 1", and with its opacity set to "Pen Pressure" I find it a great tool for making scribbles with your tablet. By pressing down you will be adjusting the size of the brush; the heavier you press down, the darker the marks with be on your canvas.

Step 02

Here I used an airbrush to make some parts darker – notice that the edges are softer and more gradual (**Fig.02**). At this stage I started to sketch the outlines to help me establish the shape and form later on. As I went along I

continued to use the hard edge brush for the outlines, and soft edges for the shading.

Step 03

Here it was still a bit tacky, but slowly I started to see that volumes were beginning to emerge (**Fig.03**). I also realised his white, glowing eyes would make a good focal point.

Step 04

Here I tried to imagine that there was a light source right on top of his right shoulder (in contrast to **Fig.03** which has very neutral

lighting), and from there I started to create highlights and shaded areas. Overall, I was satisfied with the values of the large parts, so I continued making the lights lighter and defining the darkest of the darks for the smaller details (**Fig.04a**).

While adding some accessories and armour on his hand, I also noticed some minor twisting on his right arm, which I thought suggested a more menacing pose. His head (**Fig.04b**) was also detailed with a more determined facial expression. Part of obtaining a more realistic lighting is the realisation of how it bends and reflects on the shape of an object, so you must not forget this when you're in the phase of adding the smaller details!

Fig.06
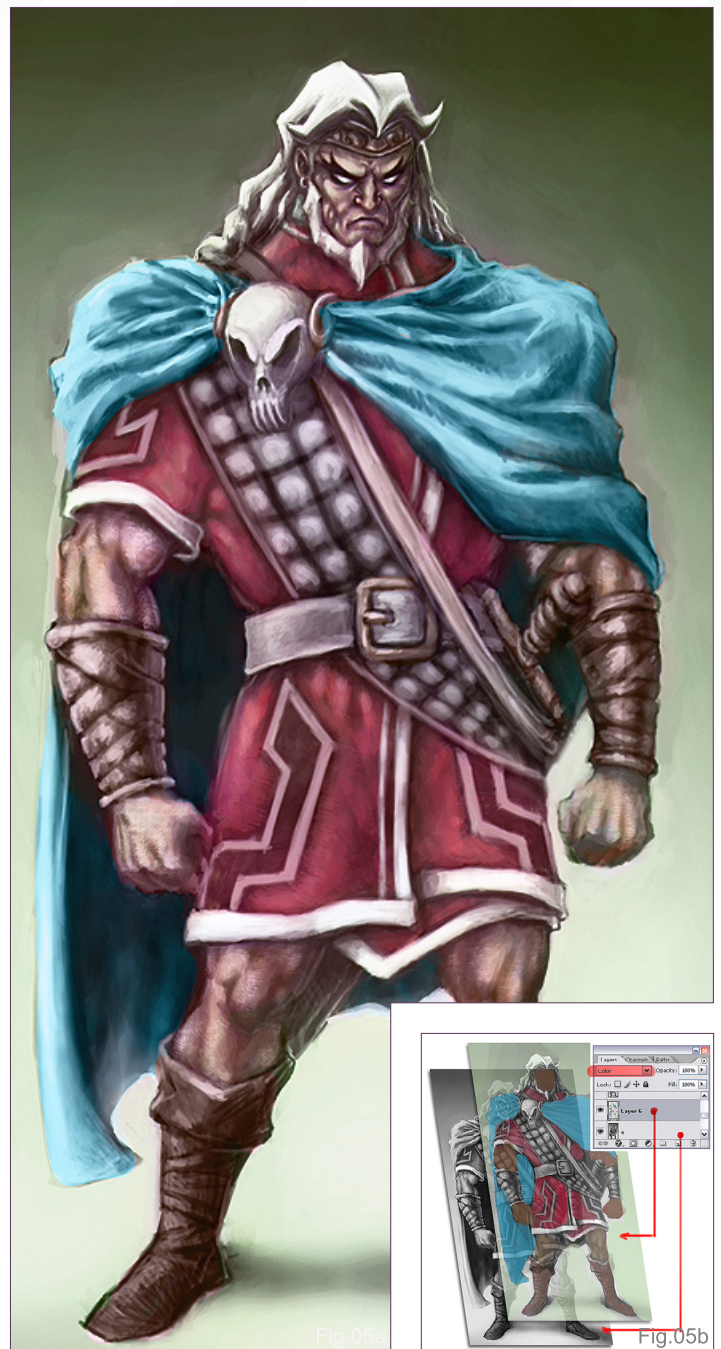
Fig 05
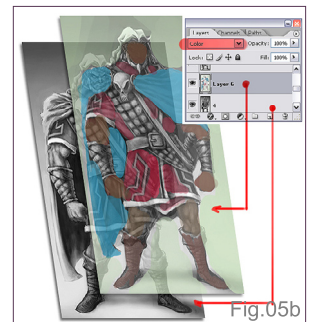
Fig.05b

Step 05

Here I duplicated the greyscale layer and painted it with my chosen colour, or simply added another layer on top – making sure I chose the Colour layer setting (**Fig.05a** and **Fig.05b**). Using this technique you can save a lot of time editing the colours back and forth; you can actually make adjustments on it without affecting the greyscale of your drawing underneath.

Step 06

Finally, I chose to leave the background de-saturated (I had different plans about how to colour it later on). As for the warrior, after merging the colour layer and the greyscale layer into one, I began adding details to

his armour, such as his arm band, belt, skull buckle, and the stripes on his cape (**Fig.06**). Notice I now added his weapon; I think that gives more sense to his pose.

Step 07

I didn't really have an idea about how to make a good background for this piece, except for a feeling it should look chaotic and messy, so as to support the suggestion of a war going on in the backdrop. So I simply masked the subject out and started painting saturated colours (**Fig.07**).

Step 08

Here is the final outcome. The style of the background is the result of
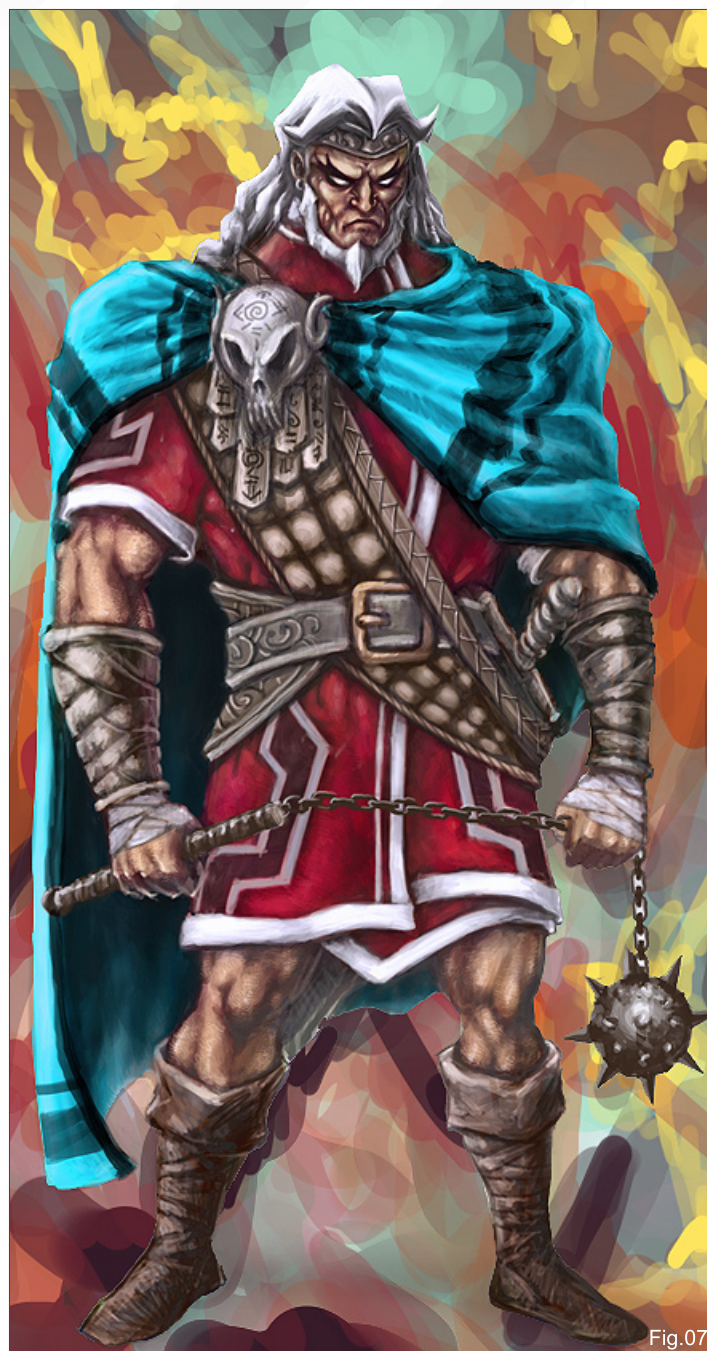
Fig.07

Fig.08

smudging and the random damping of various custom brushes made in Photoshop. I simply grabbed whatever brush I saw in the selector and applied it to the canvas, playing around with the different layer settings (**Fig.08**).

Raffy Dematawaran

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shatteredfx@hotmail.com

2nd Matteo'89

Hello to all the pencil-dudes out there, around the world! This is my first step-by-step article, and also my first tutorial – ever! I've never felt too good at being one of those people who can teach others, but I'll give it a go!

Okay, so first of all my name is Matthew Ciompala, aka "Mateo", and I'm from Poland (if you would like to pronounce my surname like a native Polish, it's very simple: Chom-power – and power you have to read like in the songs, you know, "wer = long a").

The Super Stylised Challenge is one of my favourite contests at ConceptArt.org, because I can use all of my creative and caricature skills to compete! This time, the subject was "Ancient Warrior". I decided to look for inspiration in the Asterix and Obelix comic books, which you can see from my model sheet in **Fig.01** – an ancient Celtic warrior.

I didn't stop there though and searched for something else. After experimenting with shapes, I found something that interested me! Having a lot of great concepts made for Mulan in my mind, I decided to try and make a body for this guy's face, which you can see in **Fig.02**.
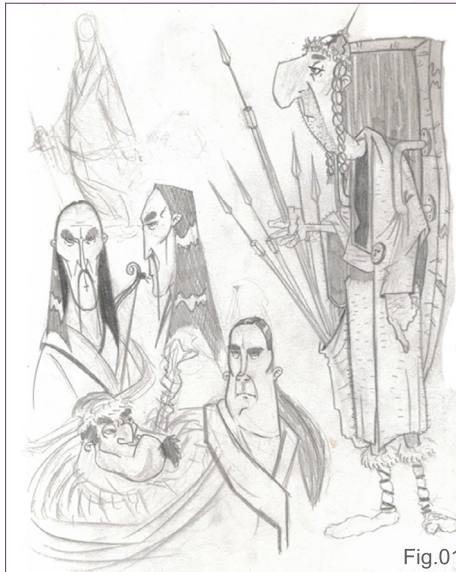
Fig.01

Fig.02

Fig.03

Fig.04

Fig.05

While still at this stage I would like to add that all of my characters are brought to life through the design of their head, first. With a nice head shape/design, I know how the entire body should and may look.

After finding the silhouette, I was ready to design a detailed body and make the pose for the image, which you can see in **Fig.03**.

What I have learned by observing the works of other artists and how they work, is to not be afraid of going back to the beginning if you are not happy with something – erase it and start again if you have to! Sometimes spontaneous sketches are cool, but then sometimes spontaneous sketches don't look so good in the image as a whole. By the way, I'm not going to teach you in this article because I'm not a good person to do this; I only want to suggest things to you and show how I work.

In the next step I started working on a new design for my yak, because I wasn't too happy with the first one. In my opinion, the face was without

any emotion or character. The new model sheet for my yak was much better – the animal is telling us something by the expression on his face (**Fig.04**).

So when I had all of these things done and I was happy with them, I was then able to continue and ink my image. The real question for me was whether I was going to do this in real ink, or digitally? This time I decided to use digital ink (**Fig.05**).

At this point, I would like to add something about my manual skills. Let's call this part, "Introduction to the digi-painting massacre".

I feel very comfortable with manual drawing techniques, but when it comes to digital drawing and painting I'm pretty bad! Traditional media is easier to me, but I can't paint yet – you know, I'm self-taught and still exploring the world of art at the moment! But I think I'm pretty good at drawing; I'm doing it all the time – on the bus, outdoors and at home. Thanks to life, I think I'm making good progress; I feel better at drawing day-by-day. If you are afraid or ashamed of drawing in public places, I'm telling you not to worry - people around you are simply quietly looking at your hands making magic! So after school, when I'm getting into the bus to travel

Fig.07

Fig.06

back home, I'm simply looking for a place to sit and draw, without thinking about anyone around me. Okay, so enough about me, let's get back to the step-by-step!

Where was I? Oh yes, colouring (**Fig.06**). As I've already mentioned, I'm not so good at colouring digitally; I'm never satisfied with the final image.

So what can I tell you about this process? I simply filled the canvas with a colour, and I

found good photos with nice colours to create a colour palette. This was one of the worst moments for me – making a palette – jeez! I was trying to get everything to work, and sometimes it does, but all of my best pieces have been born from a lot of pain!

I was thinking about many ways of colouring, but I decided to copy colours from the first version of the image, which I had painted without adding contour lines. I decided to add contours because the artists on the ConceptArt.org forums said

they liked my sketches, so I thought it was a good idea to make a hard ink sketch – and I did!

The last step after the colouring was to make a final rendering, like a frame, and I played with the hue, saturation and contrast. I like matte colours, so I used the Hue & Saturation tool in Photoshop, and then added some noise – Filters > Add Noise – which created a nice effect for me, which I liked!

My standard rendering style is to make a scratchy frame with custom brushes, and here is the final work (**Fig.07**).

I would like to thank everyone who voted for me and likes my work. I would also like to invite you to visit my blog for more art, and I hope you have enjoyed this article. See you soon!

Matthew Ciompala

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teo-disturbed@o2.pl

1st bstsk

Introduction

As always, the hardest part with any image or character is coming up with the idea. The ancient warrior theme was so vast that it was difficult to narrow it down to a particular time period – Vikings, Aztecs, Muslim, Mongol, Japanese – all these warriors would be interesting to play with. In the end I decided to go for a Chinese warrior, since it would give me an appealing colour scheme, using reds, blacks and golden tones. Once I'd decided on a Chinese warrior, I went for some kind of elite bodyguard – maybe a weapon master, the one in charge of training royalty.

Step 1

I started sketching some ideas and quickly came up with his face. As for posture, I tried to portray

Fig.02

Fig.03

Fig.01

him proud and strong, befitting of someone with his age and position. I decided not to give him too much ornamentation as warriors can often end up looking like they're going to a modelling contest, and I wanted mine to be a real badass (**Fig.01**).

Step 2

Next I laid out flat colours, filling the drawing and trying to get the contrast I was going for. At this stage, I just concerned myself with the basic outlines and used different layers for each

colour. The aim here was to make the image appealing enough (**Fig.02**).

Step 3

On a different layer, set to multiply, I started painting in the shadows. Since I had no background in mind, and I was going for the best character I could get, I was quite loose with my shadowing and light source – it didn't have to be perfect. The importance of the shadows here was in defining volumes and making the warrior look believable (**Fig.03**).

Step 4

After deciding on the best colours I could get, I started refining and adding detail. I usually start with the face, since I find having its features and expression makes the character believable – more real – and it helps me to make better decisions about his outfit, background, attitude, and so on. I tried to leave the image as open as possible, since new ideas would be cropping up all the time – and if they're good ones then it's always ideal to be prepared to incorporate them into your image (**Fig.04**).

Step 5

For a stylised, cartoony character like this one, where I didn't want to be too realistic or give it much texture, I just used Photoshop's basic brushes, changing their sizes. In this particular

Fig.04

defining stage, I used the Smudge tool a lot. I find the Smudge tool to be one of my favourites, since it gives me lots of control over the shapes, mixing or smoothing shadows, and presenting clear outlines.

Fig.05

Actually this stage was the longest part, and it was here that I changed his hair colour to a much darker tone, and made it look more hair like, as well as corrected his right shoulder (**Fig.05**).

Step 6

I painted his tattoos at this stage, which made the character much tougher looking and more interesting (in my opinion, at least). I gave him some shadows and a slight change of colour to the background, to make him stand out in a more defined space, and did the same with his weapon. I would have liked to have had time to make something more of his bracelets, but time was of the essence, of course (**Fig.06**).

Final

To finish it up, I looked for the Kanji Chinese characters for "ancient" and "warrior", and labelled the image with them. The sepia colour filter was intended to give it all a subtle aged feeling, but the truth is that I wasn't entirely happy with it.

Anyway, you have to draw the line somewhere, otherwise you'll be working on your images for ever, so I did that here and called my piece finished (**Fig.07**).

Hope you all like it!

Fig.06

福武者

Felipe Fernández Morell

Fig.07

"Discover planet ice, desert, rock" ad campaign for Jeep/Daimler Chrysler by abc colorstudio.

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ANIMATION
& VISUAL EFFECTS

VFS student work by Zheng Tang

Speed Painting

Welcome to the Speed Painting section of the magazine. This month we've asked two artists to produce a speed painting based on a simple, one-line brief. Here we feature the final paintings and the overview of the creation processes.

This month our talented artists, Eduardo Peña and Emrah Elmasli, tackle the topic:

FEAR ENGULFED THEM
AS THEY REALISED THEY WERE
ABOUT TO DIE

EDUARDO PEÑA

Created In:

Photoshop

Introduction

Before starting the composition for this piece, I considered the general theme and tried to develop a narrative style that I would like to apply to the image; i.e: the type of story I was going to tell, the situations that would occur within the space, related circumstances and the feelings associated etc.

Concept

The nature of the concept allowed me to propose a story and/or physical event,
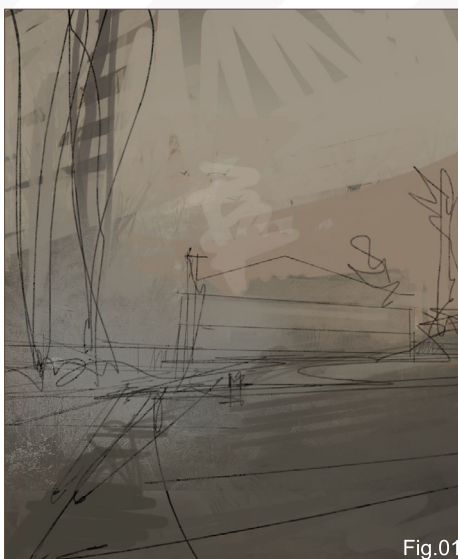
Fig.01

Fig.02

particularly in relation to where the story would take place. This is why I thought up a situation involving fear, which is generated by the curiosity of two adolescents who are trying to break away from their daily routine and get
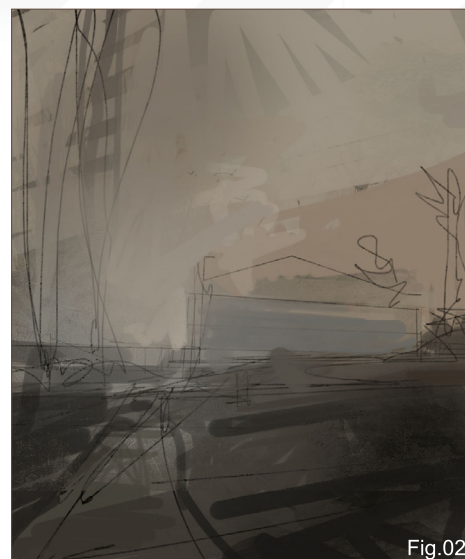
inside the woods near their home – just to waste some time and amuse themselves! Without noticing, they travel deeper inside the woods, far from their homes. As darkness falls, they find an isolated home and decided to go inside. When they are drawing close to the entrance, near the door, suddenly – and instinctively – they start to run, full of fear! Something has happened inside the house, but unfortunately only they saw what it was …

Working Process

In this piece, as well as in others, I want to experiment with a freer, faster process that allows me to confront technical elements that are being discovered as the project evolves.

I start off with simple spot and brush mark marking in order to find some visual orientation within the image, and I also start playing with creating textures and lines to achieve a more plastic-like sensation. Once I find a "friendly spot", I make a quick draft with black lines to define some objects within the scene (**Fig.01**). This allows me, little by little, to start defining the elements that make up the image, along with the general environment – which gives me good composition and also provides visual definition. I am trying to build a special moment in the day, (in this case, sunset), so I use a few warm colours to portray an afternoon setting, and I mix things up a little with some cold colours to build
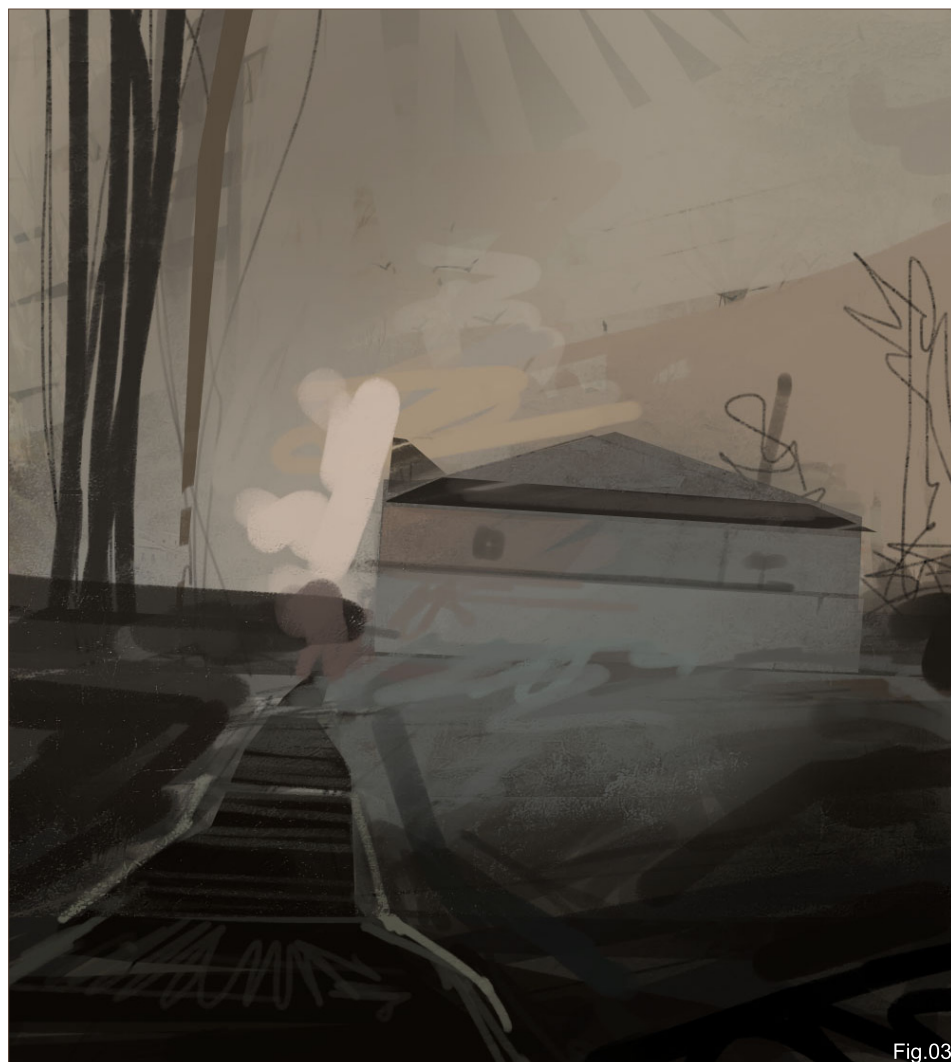
Fig.03

up the moodiness of the image (**Fig.02**). I also obtain some interesting textures with this treatment (**Fig.03** & **Fig.04**).

Another interesting technique I like to employ when "speed painting" is working directly on a layer and taking advantage of possible "errors". I tend to favour them, rather than being afraid of them, and I liked to play around with what I find. Somehow, by doing this, they help me to create a whole collage of ideas (**Fig.05**)!

I also like to work with the basic brush with a rock texture; this gives me the sensation of working with charcoal – it's truly phenomenal! It's simply great to learn from the easiest of things! Further down the line, I also use vegetation brushes and textures, although they are not my priority; the less material I use the better, because I learn to develop methods that bring good results – something good will come out for sure (**Fig.06** & **Fig.07**)!

Fig.04

Fig.06
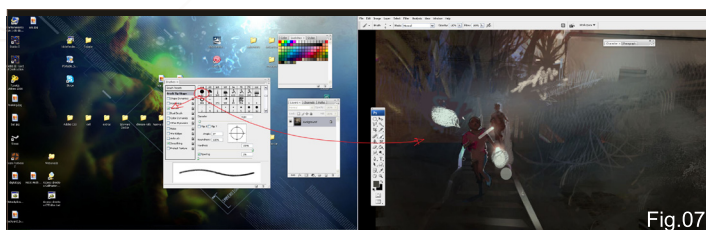
Fig.07
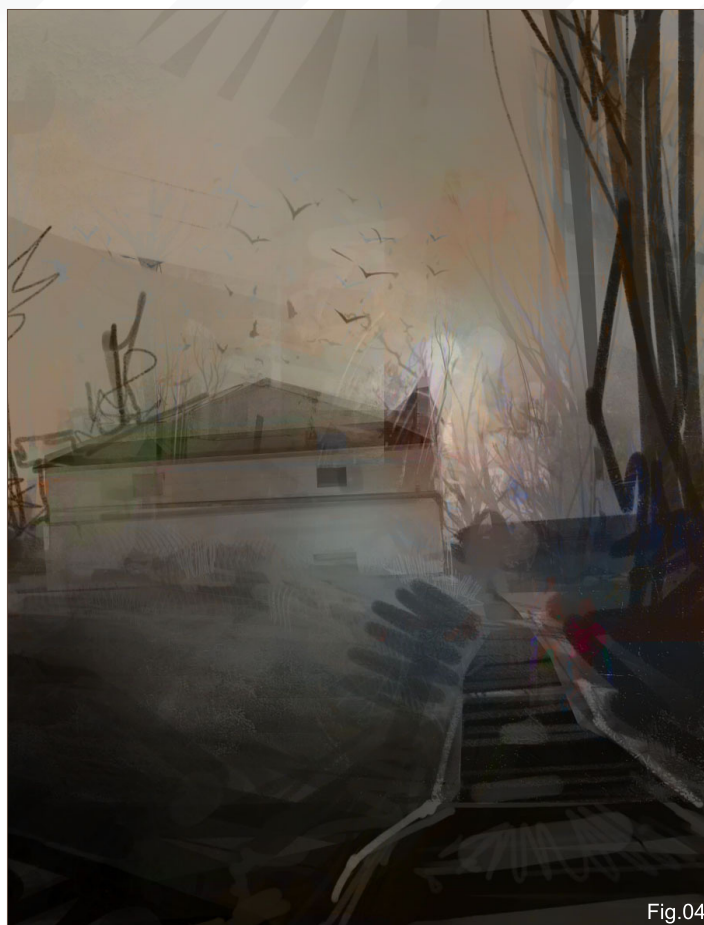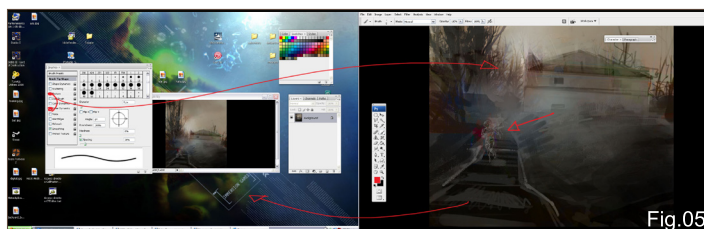
Fig.05

Continuing work on the structure of the image I try to define some objects, or items, that are important to my concept, such as the trees, house, stairs – and the two young people. Finally, under some of the details, I apply some more brushstrokes – and then I'm finished!

Conclusion

I really don't know what these young people saw, but situations like these are pretty common and can lead to any number of different events that we do not expect, giving us cause to panic.

I hope you have enjoyed this tutorial. "Trick or treat!"

Eduardo Peña

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EMRAH ELMASLI

Created In:

Photoshop

Introduction

Hi all, I'm back with a new speed painting this month! This time the subject is quite interesting, actually; I'm going to figure out how to draw a few people who are about to die! Hmm … So after doing a few sketches in my sketchbook I decided to go with a simple but effective composition. I'm going to draw a giant coming out of a forest, walking towards a couple of humans – who are of course terrified because this giant is really mad! There's no place to escape and, well, anyway – you get the idea so let's get started!

Fig.01

Fig.02

Step 01

My main software for speed paintings is Adobe Photoshop (as you may guess). I'll be using CS3 for this piece. For the first step I start by creating a new file; it's going to be a vertical composition so an A4 canvas at 150ppi will do. I need to block the main colours in, and I choose to go with a brownish and purplish palette. I use a textured "palette knife" kind of brush to block the colours in, trying to determine the places of rocks and trees very roughly. I also apply some very simple lighting into the scene. I guessed direct midday sunlight would do.

Step 02

I create a new layer and start to paint the giant in; I use the same block-in brush for this as well. Starting with a dark colour I slowly paint some

highlights and flesh out this enormous creature. I use light purple for the highlights because I imagine that this guy is coming out from the darkness. This also creates a mysterious atmosphere, too.

Step 03

Next step is to start detailing. I don't do anything special just yet, really – just painting straight away, trying to figure out the gesture of the giant. I figure he's going to be holding a big club which he's carved from a tree trunk. Forming the background at the same time, I use green to create a feeling of fogginess. I want to use a Kicker light for the giant to separate him from the background a bit, so I paint in a very slight yellow light hitting him from behind. At this point it's starting to come together.

Step 04

Time to paint in the terrified humans! I use a very small brush because these guys are going
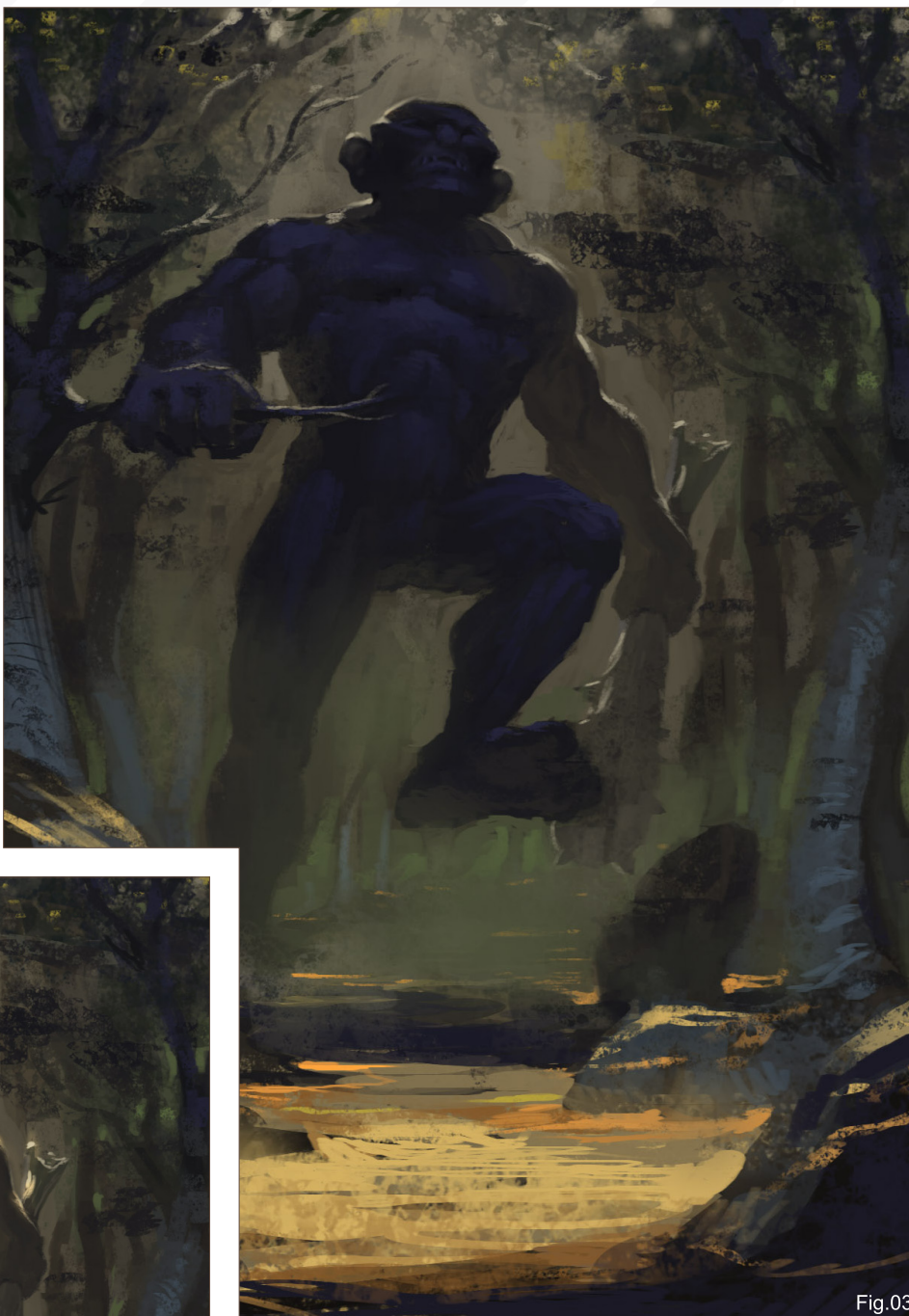
Fig.03
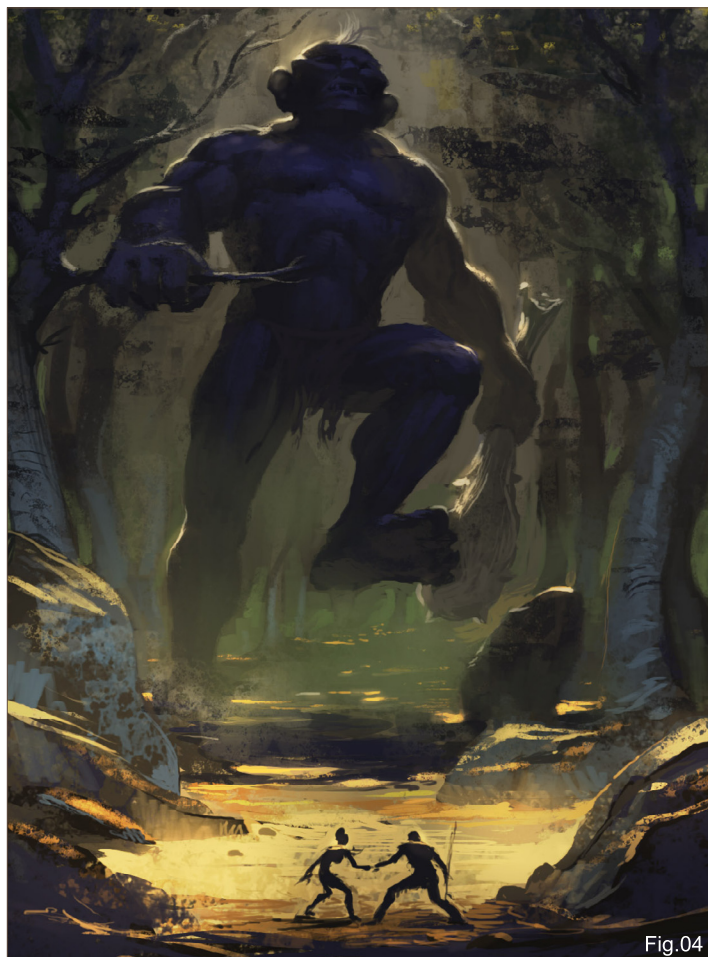
Fig.04

to be tiny in comparison to the giant. I start painting them in, trying to capture a "trapped" kind of gesture. When happy with the result I can start making the highlights "glow" a little. To do this I create a new layer and select Overlay from the layer options; I select a de-saturated yellow and start painting. This basically gives a glow effect and helps to enhance the mood of the piece.

Final

It's almost finished now; there are only a few details left. I continue adding the blood on the giant's club and mouth. It would also be ideal to fix his right hand as well, because it looks somewhat odd. Lastly, I create an adjustment layer to adjust the colours slightly (Image > Adjustments >

Custom Brushes

Digital Painting Tutorial Series EBook

Introduction:

The Custom Brushes eBook is a 72-page guide on how to create your very own set of custom brushes. We have asked industry professionals from the likes of Carlos Cabrera, Kim Taylor, Melanie Delon, Marc Brunet, Mike Corriero, Richard Tilbury, Brian Recktenwald, Mike Lim (aka Daarken), George Patsouras, Larla Ortiz and Ignacio Bazan Lazcano to create easy-to-follow guides/tutorials on how to create Custom Brushes. As well as giving expert tuition, some of the artists have also supplied their brushes and these can be downloaded at the beginning and end of the tutorials, where available.

This tutorial eBook also includes 84 free downloadable brushes.
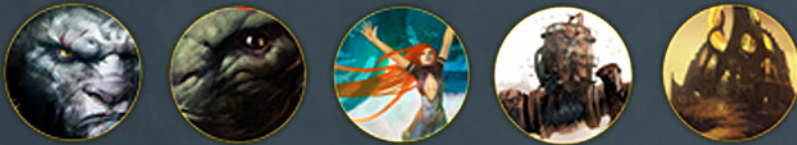
The artists featured are:

Mike Corriero,
Richard Tilbury,
Kim Taylor,
Carlos Cabrera,
Melanie Delon,
Marc Brunet,
Karla 'Icon' Ortiz,
Brian Recktenwald,
Daarken (Mike Lim),
George Patsouras &
Ignacio Bazán Lazcano

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> "One of the key advantages of painting for leisure is that you are your own art director; however, the offshoot of this is that you are also your harshest critic."

SPACE PAINTING

SPACE PAINTING
PART 5: COLONISED PLANETS

Created In:

Photoshop

Welcome back to the fifth instalment of this space painting series. In this chapter, we have finally relinquished the heavy theory aspects of composition, painting and rendering, and now take the opportunity to tackle one of our more sci-fi based topics: Colonised Worlds. In imagining the aspect of colonised worlds, there are many renders of futuristic cities that are both beautiful and inspirational, and images that seem to influence a generation of artists. So let's imagine a large-scale, multi-asset environment, featuring such futuristic worlds…

Overview

During this workshop we will also discuss, in finer detail, the challenges of illustrating an image through to its finality, and the various choices that one has to make when depicting a theme. Inevitably, there comes a point where even an image cannot be saved, and you have to make a key decision as to whether to persevere or adapt it into something more fitting. And it is these decisions and troubleshooting elements that make illustration even more worthwhile.

One of the key advantages of painting for leisure is that you are your own art director; however, the offshoot of this is that you are also your harshest critic. So it is also a matter of good time management (i.e. are you spending too long on the image?), finishing (an image is said to never be finished until you run out of time!), avoiding over-rendering (knowing when
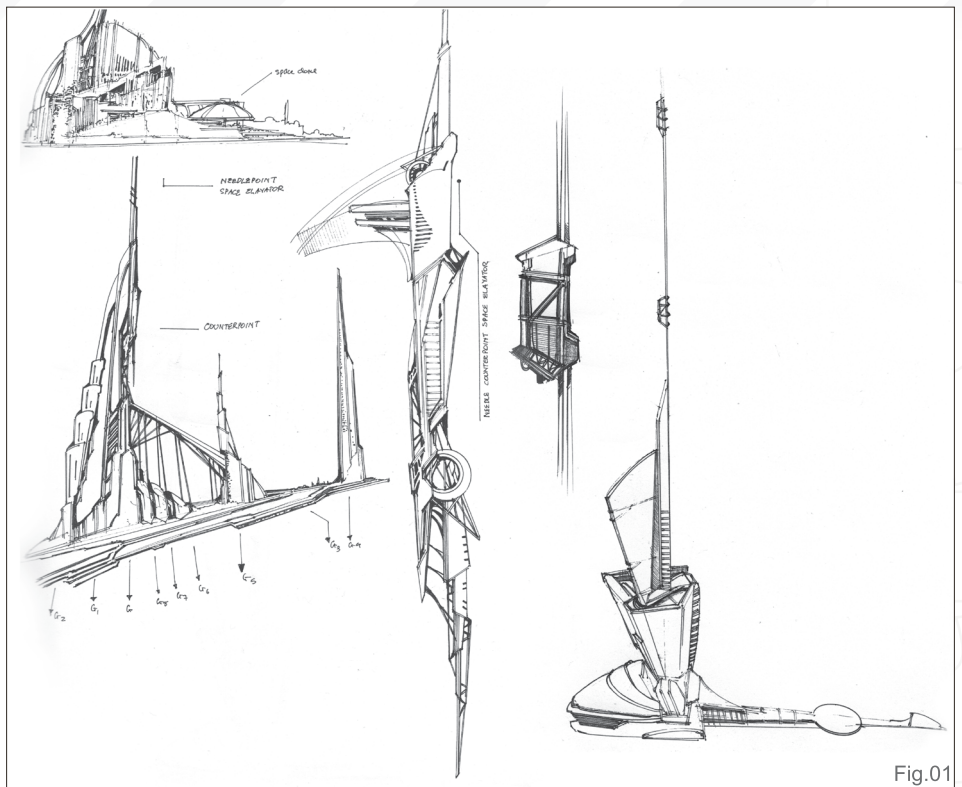

Fig.01

Fig.01 – 02: Various sketches exploring different architectural styles to house a space elevator. These include hypothetical designs of the elevator tower itself and potential portable man-sized containers to lift travellers and tourists on board. It is envisioned that the mass transit of goods would be via a special freight container
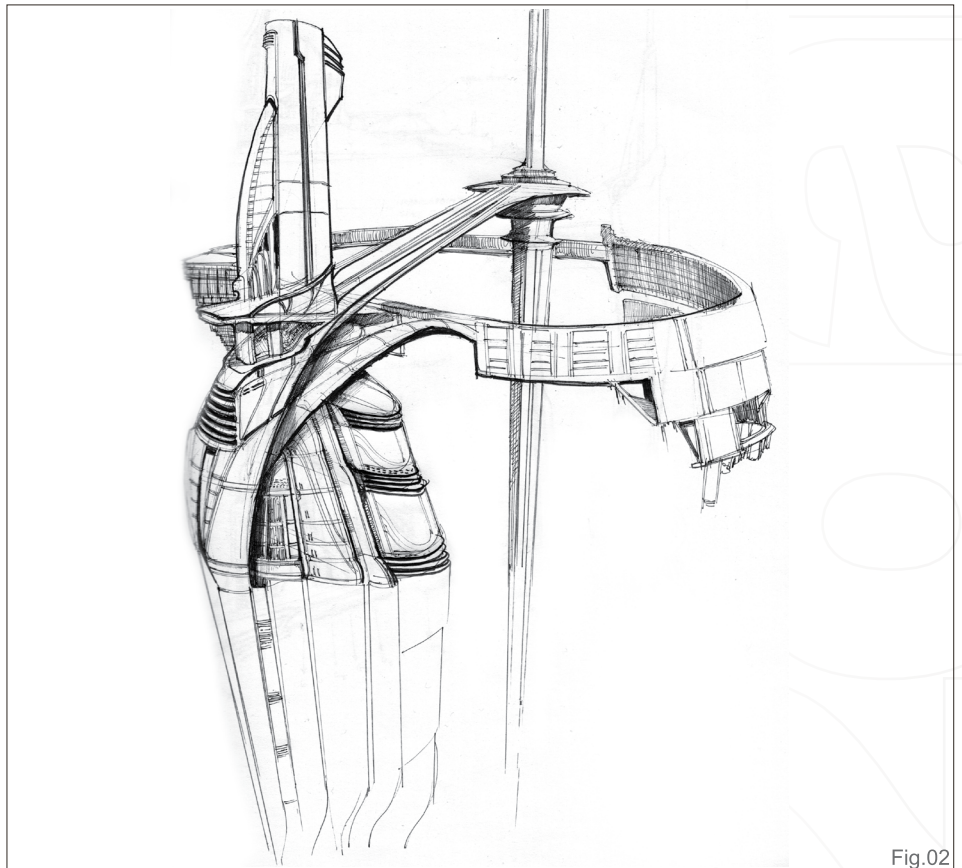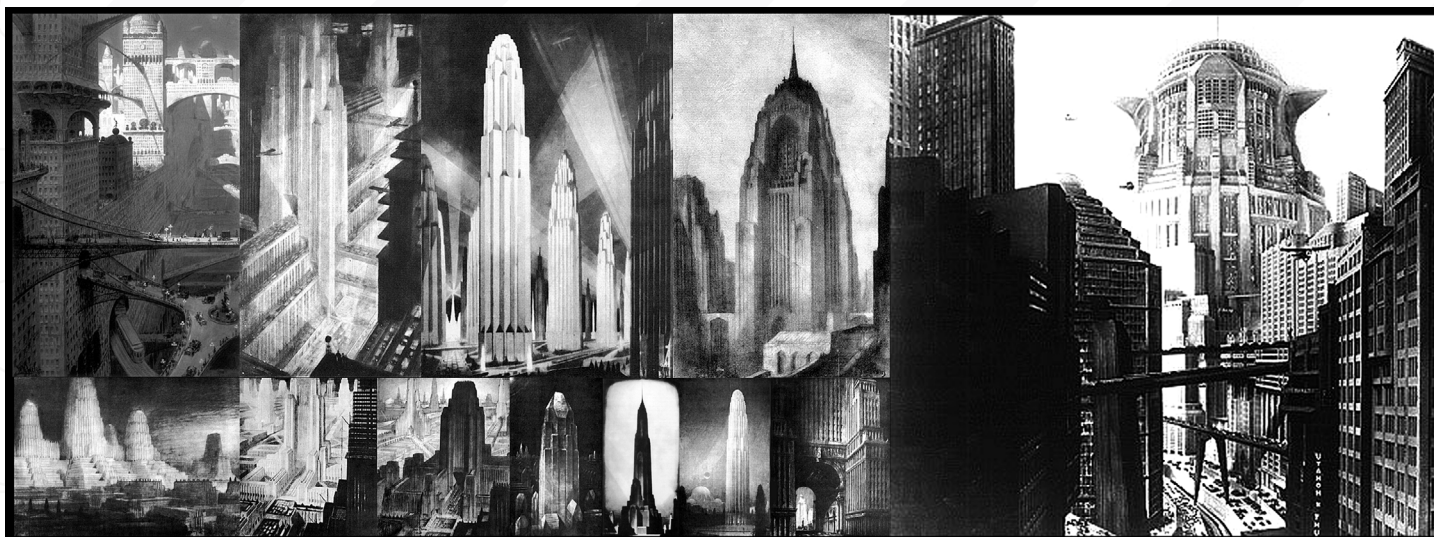

Fig.02

Fig.03: Various retro futuristic skyscrapers of the 50-60s, notably the highly graphical renderings of skyscrapers, by Hugh Ferriss.

to call it a day, or having overworked an image that ultimately is not working out), and selling the story (does your image work as the "money shot"?).

Space Elevator

The space elevator was first proposed by Russian scientist, Konstantin Tsiolkovsky in 1895, after looking at the Eiffel Tower. Subsequently, it was further explored and popularised by Arthur C. Clarke in his book, *The Fountains of Paradise* (1979). So let's explore the concept of a space elevator as a key vital mode of mass transport between a planet side and near planet side/low orbit. The key features of producing a space elevator, traditionally, have been to simplistically design the following:

- A fixed point in space
- A lightweight cable system
- An appropriate counterweight

If we consider the current day challenges of building a space elevator on Earth, we firstly need to determine a fixed point in space, known as a "geostationary point" above a planet. This point is roughly 22,300 miles (35,900km) above the surface of Earth. The reason why a geostationary object does not fall downwards towards the planet is due to the centrifugal force caused by the circular motion, cancelling out the force of gravity. It is at the geostationary point that the force of gravity is sufficiently weak enough that this horizontal motion negates its effect, thus allowing an object, such as a satellite, to orbit in an exact fixed point in space.

Now that you have a fixed point, it seems a simple matter of hooking a long rope from the ground to the geostationary object. However, due to the immense length and weight of the rope, it will inevitably drag the geostationary object it is hooked to down into the planet's gravity. To counteract this, a secondary rope can be used to compensate it, so that it's moving away from the planet. Technological advances determine that such a lengthy cable would have to be both sufficiently lightweight and immensely durable. A "magic rope" basically. For this, Japan is looking into constructing some carbon nano fibres that are 100 times stronger than the current carbon nano tube technology.

For the purposes of this tutorial, we will assume that this technological barrier and such limitations are easily achievable.

Fig.01 and **Fig.02** show various designs and concepts that explore different space elevator designs. In particular, the focus is on the main housing unit that will be based planetside. It is envisioned that, on the near space side, a geostationary space station or object will allow the tethering of the space elevator and cable.
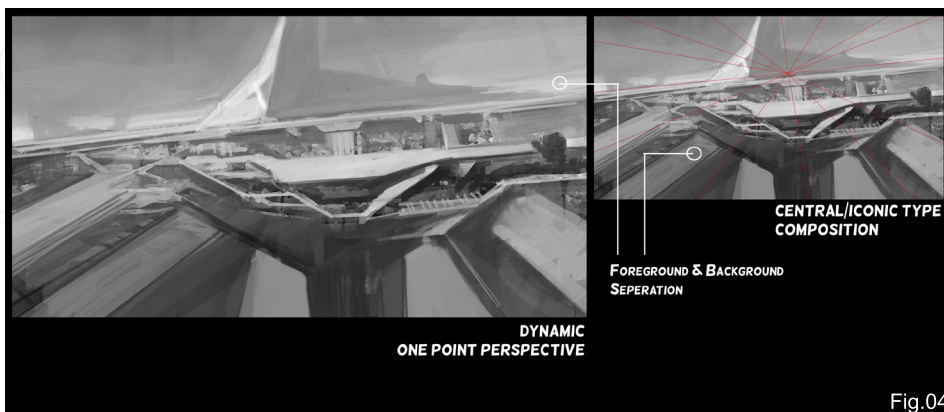
In the future, the idea of a space dock will allow for the ease and transport of goods and inhabitants from foreign worlds via a space elevator. This presents a relatively cost effective type of space transit and will also have minimal ecological impact.

Skyscrapers of the Retro Future

For the design of our main composition, it

CENTRAL/ICONIC TYPE COMPOSITION

FOREGROUND & BACKGROUND SEPERATION

DYNAMIC ONE POINT PERSPECTIVE

Fig.04

USE SELECTIONS FOR SHARPER CLEAN EDGES

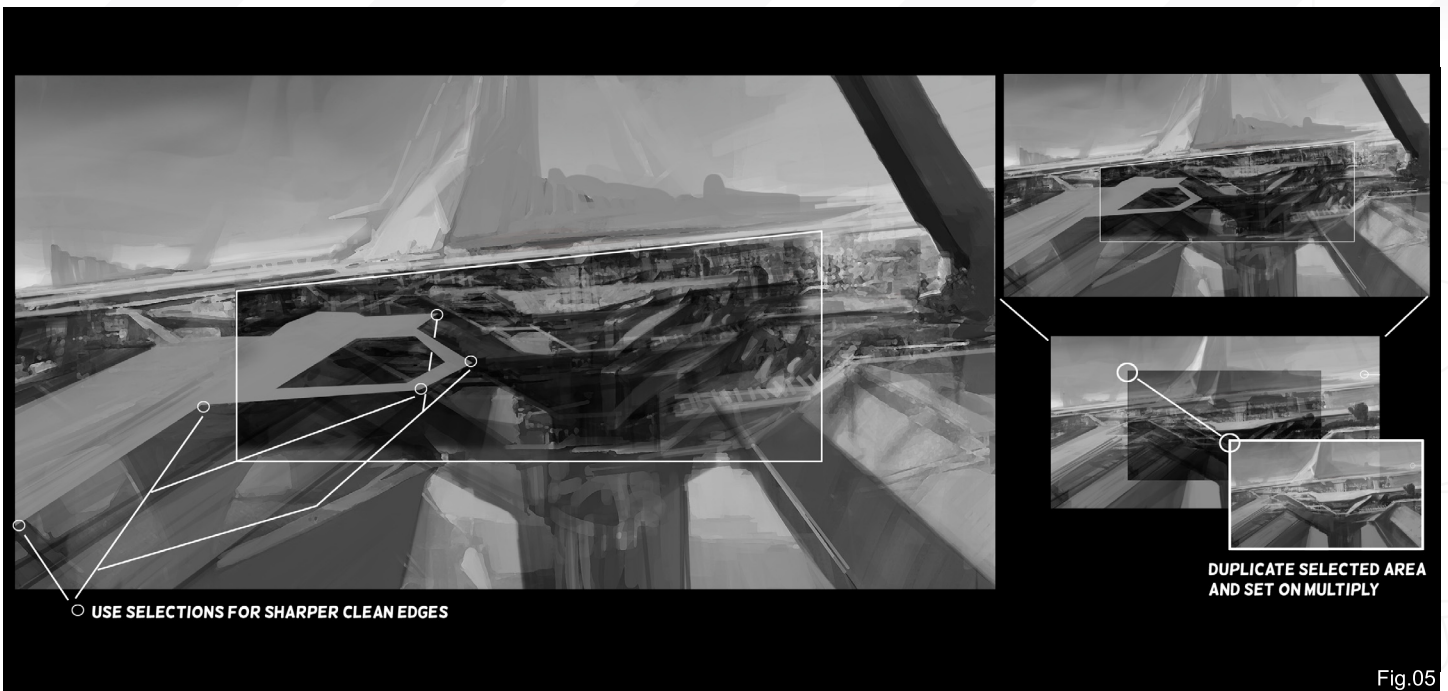DUPLICATE SELECTED AREA
AND SET ON MULTIPLY

Fig.05

is sometimes best to do a bit of research to determine what styles have been explored before. This allows us a sensible base for our inspiration, exploration and the ultimate production of an alternative (if keeping with a chosen style) or new style. For this workshop, we look at the architectural genius of Hugh Ferriss (1889-1962), a master of shadow and light. His works show a technical brilliance of contrasts and towers of epic proportions (**Fig.03**).

Another inspirational source is the artist, Erich Kettelhut (1893-1979). As both set designer and later art director, Kettelhut was one of the production team formed during 1924 to work with Fritz Lang and Thea von Harbou on developing the film and preparing it for shooting. Together with the cameraman, Karl Puth he experimented with different heights and angles for perspective vistas and developed an understanding for the way film can represent architecture. His renderings of a majestic Babylonian metropolis can be seen in **Fig.03**.

The retro feel of these skyscrapers shows a refreshing sense of titanic proportions, and harken back to a time when mankind felt they had a definite purpose for the future.

In the future of the retro 50s and 60s, man would one day live in mile-high, elegant and streamline skyscrapers of imposing architectural grandness.

Part 1: Painting an Arcology

For the remainder of this workshop I will take you through the design, composition and challenges of building an arcology and space elevator into our final illustration. But first of all, I'll explain a bit about an arcology:

"Arcology is Paolo Soleri's concept of cities which embody the fusion of architecture with ecology. The arcology concept proposes a highly integrated and compact three-dimensional urban form that is the opposite of urban sprawl with its inherently wasteful consumption of land, energy and time, tending to isolate people from each other and the community. The complexity and miniaturisation of the city enables radical conservation of land, energy and resources.

"An arcology would need about two percent as much land as a typical city of similar population. Today's typical city devotes more than sixty percent of its land to roads and automobile

services. Arcology eliminates the automobile from within the city. The multi-use nature of arcology design would put living, working and public spaces within easy reach of each other and walking would be the main form of transportation within the city." --Paolo Soleri (http://www.arcosanti.org/)

So in essence, we are attempting to integrate the housing of a giant space elevator with the central, large, compact living environment of an arcology.

In reference to the space elevator concepts of **Fig.01**, the bottom left design, combined with those on the far right will be used as a primary base for this painting.

Initial Composition & Layout

For our own arcology/space elevator design, I imagined an angular, white, faceted style for all buildings, cities and towers.

In the initial composition, a simple one-point perspective is used, with the focus primarily on the central tower in the middle (**Fig.04**). To showcase a bit more of the overall city, a slight tilt is used in combination with a central composition.

I imagined the foreground to incorporate a large, flattish leisure area/park with verdant hanging gardens replete with fountains and pools.

Building in Some Structure & Design

To bulk out the initial design further, I duplicate the central features and set these on multiply (**Fig.05**). Using the eraser tool, various features and facets can be etched out to create and suggest buildings, roads, towers and parallel lines.

For the foreground elements, the lasso tool is employed to provide clean selection edges, and a sharper, crisper, more defined edge. Normally, when painting a whole composition, brushstrokes can be used to suggest a range of features, and in general it is only the main forms and the contrasts of these forms that the eye is attracted to. However, the foreground elements also need to be considered with extra care within any environmental composition.

Bulking Out

Having laid-out our base, the next steps are to (**Fig.06**):

- Block out simplified angular forms
- Provide contrast and relief of foreground elements
- Maintain clean geometric shapes throughout (keeping in constant with the established design of angular and geometric design)
- Create large parallel structures that lead the eye towards the central tower

These can take up a considerable amount

BACKGROUND ELEMENTS - SIMPLIFIED ANGULAR FORMS

FOREGROUND ELEMENTS - MORE DETAILED FORMS WITH REFLECTED LIGHTING TO SHOWCASE A MODERN SURFACE TEXTURE

MIDGROUND ELEMENTS - A LARGE CENTRAL RECREATIONAL CENTRE OR PLEASURE DISTRICT FEATURING GARDENS AND CLEAN GEOMETRIC SHAPES

GIANT STRUCTURES - LARGE FLAT ANGULAR SHAPES CONTRASTED WITH SMALLER SCALED ROADWAYS AND PASSAGEWAYS PROVIDE SCALAR REFERENCE TO THE VIEWER

Fig.06

ALTERNATIVE VIEW - EXPLORING THE THEME OF A PARTIALLY COVERED INTERIOR LOOKING OUT

GIANT AD BOARDS

DOCKED SHIPS

Fig.07

of planning and consideration. However, it is worth sticking to greyscale in order to establish the forms, lighting and composition. It is at this stage that basic values and key design issues can be scribbled in or painted out easily, with less loss in overall time management.

On an alternate layer, I also explore the option of framing the composition further with a large

central covering, as if to depict a grand transport hub or station, whilst looking on towards the centre (**Fig.07**). Various other props, such as docked ships and giant, floating ad boards, are rapidly blocked in to add focal detail and scalar suggestion.

The next thing is to add further details to the various foreground elements and forms, such as decals and piping along our large, sewer-like structures (**Fig.08**). At the cross between super motorways and a central canal, I imagine the foreground to be cluttered with various pipes and adornments. Segmented, triangular pipe openings are added to the far right to offer potential refuse and waste into a toxic central canal.

Other issues to consider are the elements of atmospheric perspective. Because of all the grey elements, it can sometimes be easy to just detail both the foreground and background with the same values. By blocking in the background and mid-ground elements with a lighter grey value, we can suggest distance, space and forms.
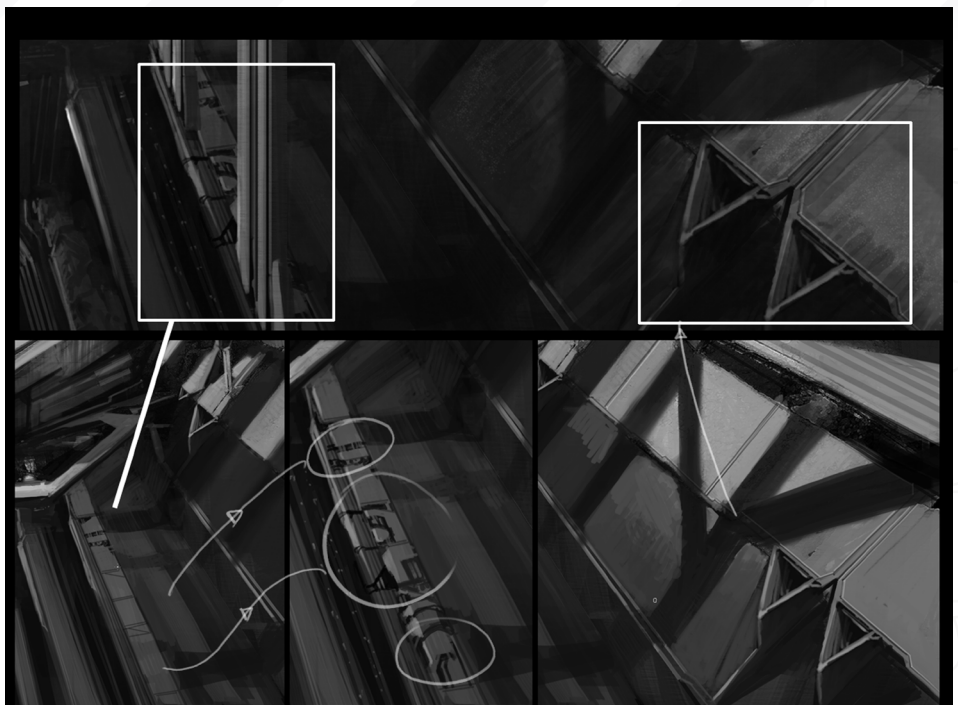
ADDING DECALS AND PIPING

Fig.08

Elements in the background merely require basic forms blocked out in order to be read well (**Fig.09**). A few new additions to the foreground include a control tower and observation balcony. I imagine the observation balcony to be a giant glass-paned deck, overlooking a curved civilian pathway. On the top right, repeating shapes of diagonally placed tower blocks are added purely as focal interest. Much like the tall Egyptian obelisks, I imagine these could serve a similar function and serve to remind the inhabitants of the grandeur of the central tower/elevator.

CONTROL TOWER

ATMOSPHERIC PERSPECTVE

OBSERVATION BALCONY

Fig.09

2dartist
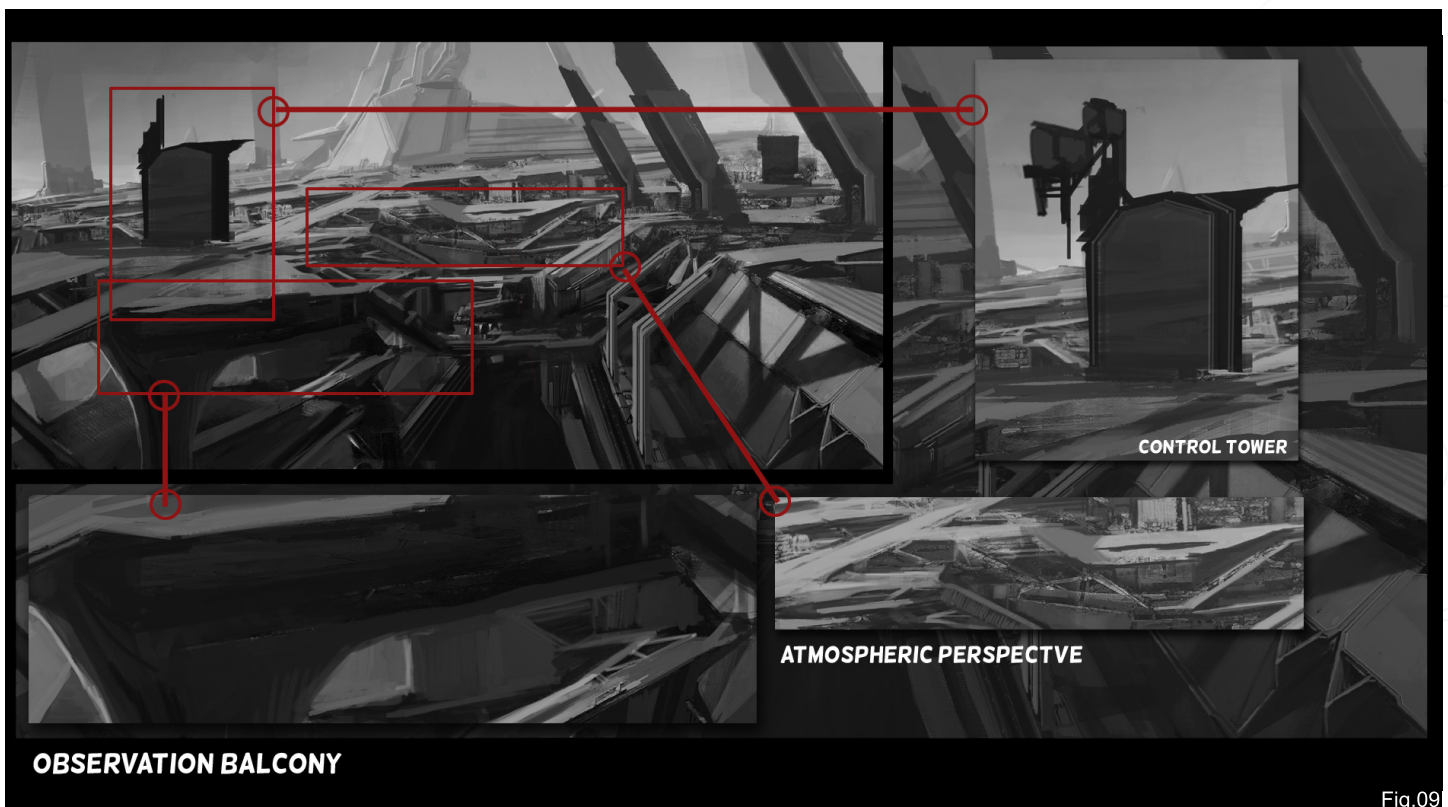
Rapid Vessel Prototyping

For this workshop, I would like to share a rapid way of prototyping transport vessels. The transport depicted in **Fig.10** is designed to be a basic civilian vessel. As such, various elements of underlying skeletal structure and foundations are shown. By initially designing a vessel in the side view, it is possible to generate many designs rapidly and quickly, each iteration producing a more detailed version. Simple top down lighting will help depict the transport's form, and once the general form is determined a small transformational shift (Ctrl + T) will be sufficient to suggest the transport's overall shape in perspective.

In another transport design, the use of the original shape is repeated in different proportions and can be used instantly to bulk out your design rapidly (**Fig.11**). Please note, however, that this is not a suggestion that one should throw away the pencil and design

3/ FINALISED BASIC DESIGN

2/ SHAPES ARE ALIGNED AND OVERALL SHAPE DEFINED

1/ BASIC BUILDING BLOCKS REPEATED TO BULK OUT SHAPE
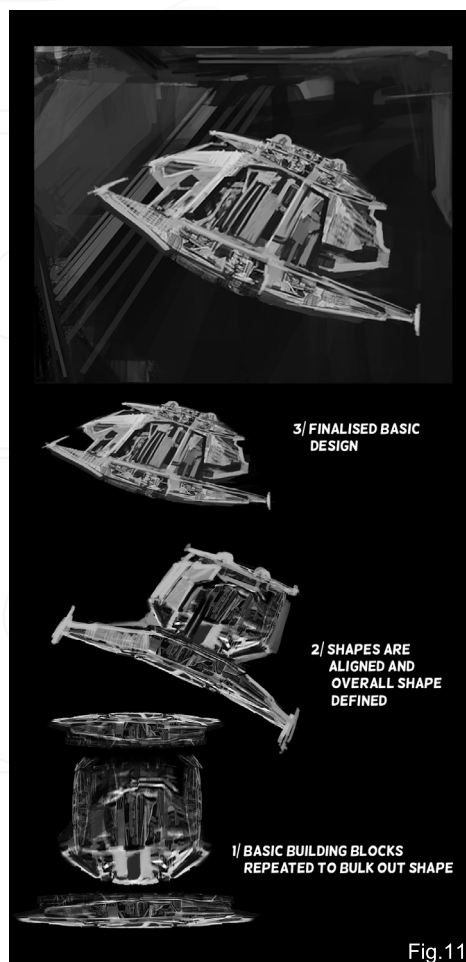
Fig.11
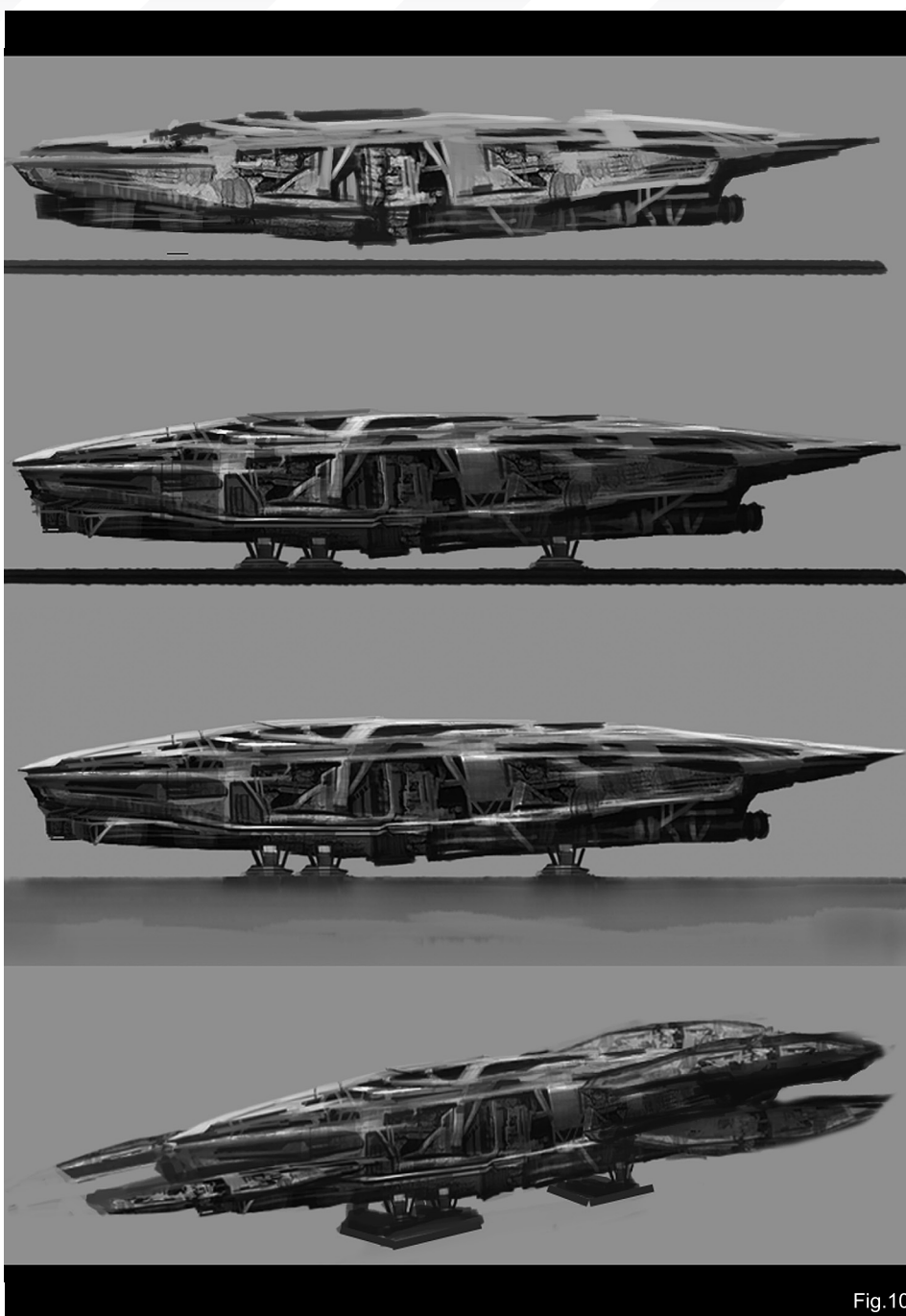
Fig.10

purely on a digital basis. The fact is that this digital prototyping method works once the basic understanding of transport design and form is well honed, which normally comes from hours of drawing transports on good old pencil and paper.

At the end of the day, personally, I still prefer designing with a simple biro and paper; fewer complications and gimmicks – just ideas. That's all it really is at the end of the day. If one can translate these ideas, even with crude sketches,

then a well-executed end product, be it a 3D model or a set design, is all that matters.

Part II: Colouring & Rendering

In theory, if the original greyscale composition is well defined, then transferring the imagination into colour should be relatively straightforward – relatively. The fact is, in some cases it works out well, but in others nothing ever seems to be good enough for the image to work out. For example, the image is "broken". Nevertheless,

to add colour there are many options, and sometimes it's more of a mood issue (akin to deciding what to have for breakfast or whether to even have breakfast).

The imagined scene would work for either a thick, atmospheric, red- and yellow-hazed planet, or even a semi-Earth type planet. One consideration is to even paint a night scene, as focal lighting and up-lit reliefs can provide for a very dramatic look and feel. But anyway, let's start with the typical colour and composition of painting a futuristic city.

In **Fig.12**, a basic, monochromic, ochre-yellow colour pass is applied via the Hue/Saturation layer option (set to Colourise). Alternatively, you can use the black/white tool in CS2 and allow for a colour tint. There are two or three other alternate methods as well. All produce the same effect: a strange, blackish, off-coloured feel.

To make the typical blue sky/yellow haze look is a matter of determining the primary colour and the ambient colour. In our case, the primary colour is a yellowish red star with a bluish atmosphere. The trick is to add each colour
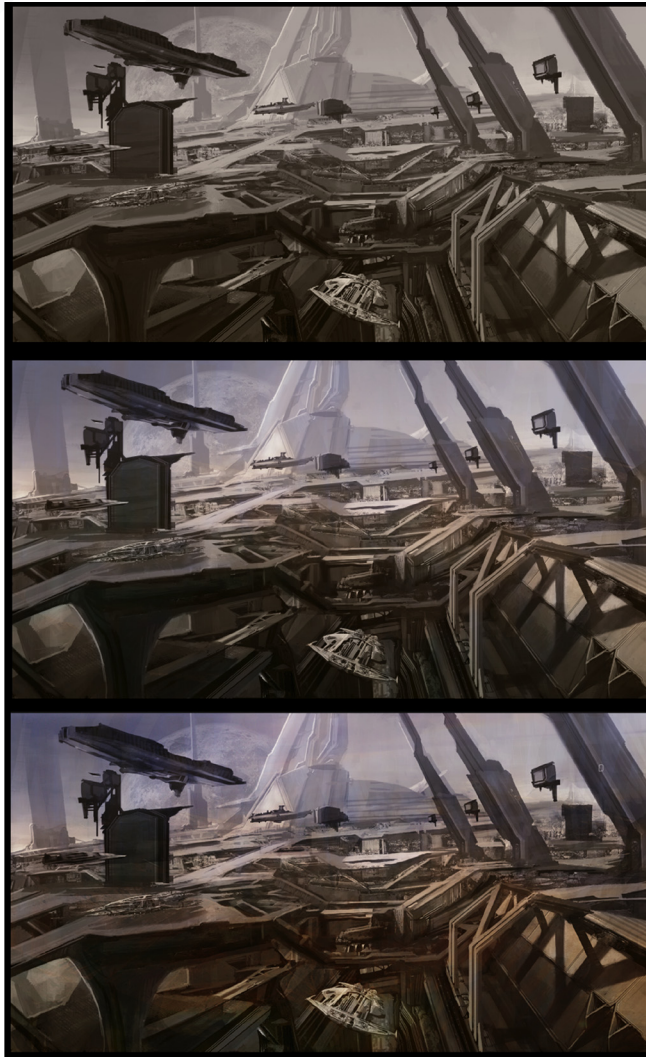
1/ MONOCHROMIC YELLOW COLOUR PASS

2/ COMPLEMENTARY DESATURATED BLUE TO INDICATE SKY AND ATMOSPHERE

3/ MID RANGE SATURATED GREEN TINGES ON FOREGROUND ELEMENTS

Fig.12
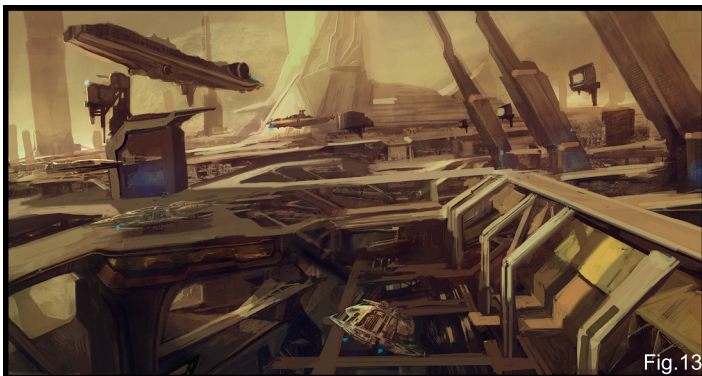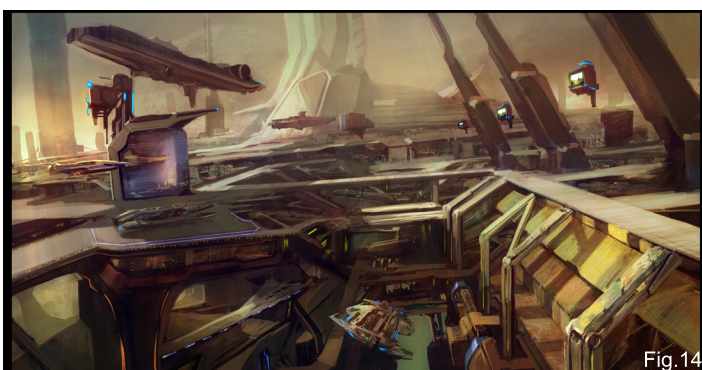
pass layer by layer, to create a homogenised feel (or mess). Ultimately, it is a subtle mixture of colour blends, some elements of repainting, and luck ("luck" because it is at this point that the whole image appears to work out well or look like some left over yoghurt pot exposed to the elements for some weeks).

Colour Choice: Yellow Haze

We will next look at three different times in the planetary cycle: daytime, dusk and twilight. We'll start with the golden haze approach (**Fig.13**). The overall image is warm, inviting and tinged with gold. For this colour choice, bluish complementary colours, such as engine washes or blue tinged lighting, can bring out a good sci-fi feel.

Some degree of repainting is required to paint out the blacker elements and line work from the greyscale painting. Overall, as long as the range is narrow, the image will work monochromatically.

The foreground elements show wear and tear and cast shadows, which helps provide better form and delineation. Vehicles are given a
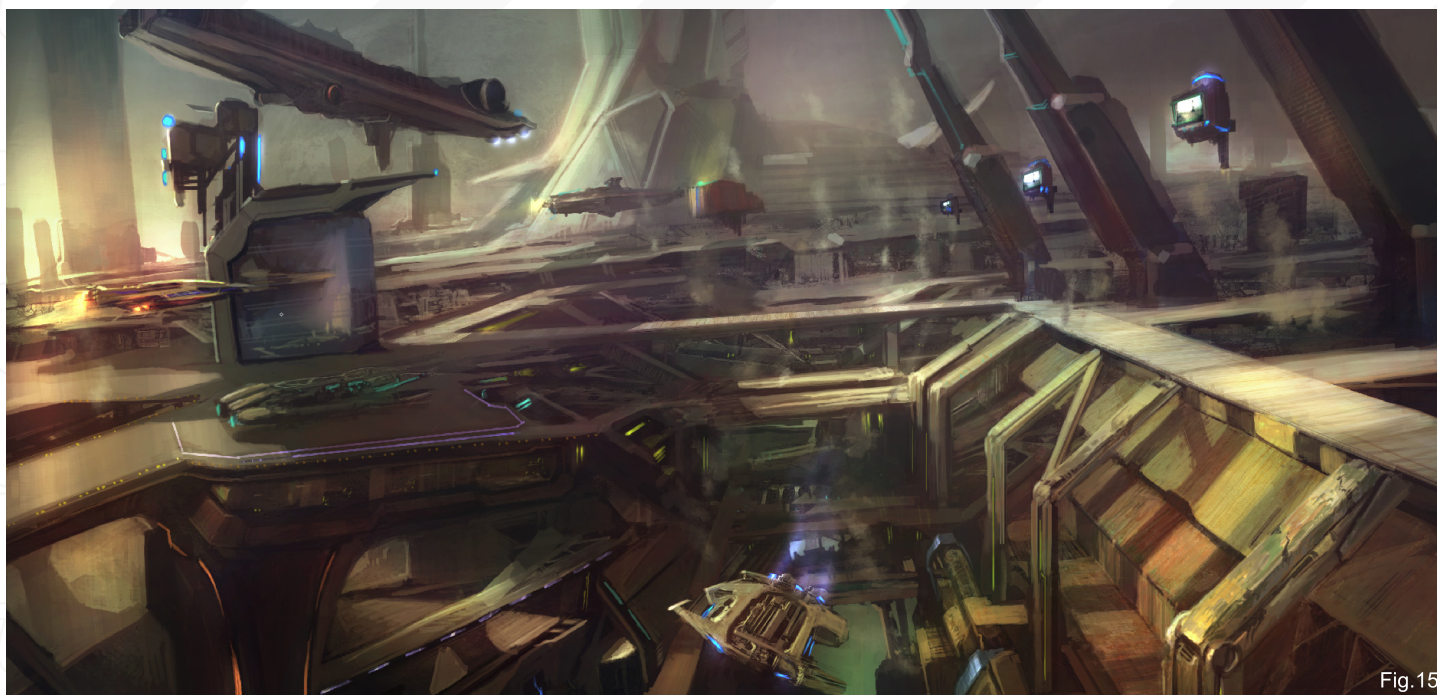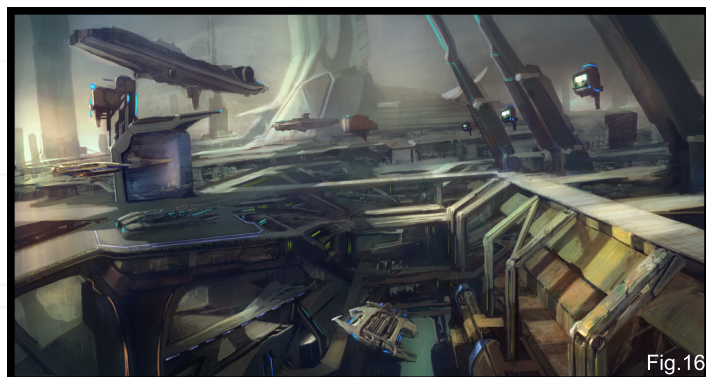

Fig.13

Fig.14

Fig.15

Fig.16

SELECTION

PAINTED SELECTIONS FOR SIMILAR PLANES

Fig.17

ADDING FINER DETAILS

Fig.18

whitish-yellow treatment and the focal primary light source is given an overexposed feel (**Fig.14**).

A tinge of blue is added to provide some complementary relief (however, be warned that this breaks the overall monochromic approach). And finally, some neon lights are added to provide more focal detail (although it can be overdone and may ruin the overall feel of a composition – a tricky choice indeed).

For the final image, a bluish/purple engine wash is added towards the central transport, and various elements of steam and smoke help to add to the feeling of an industrial city (**Fig.15**).

Colour Choice: Blue Haze

Next, we try to tackle the same scene with a more daylight-styled colour (**Fig.16**). For a daytime approach, tinges of green and some blue and orange are required, but in more subtle amounts. One thing a daytime approach is good at is suggesting atmospheric perspective.

A few simple washes of the colour balance tool, and the overall image has a daytime feel. But is it working out? Inevitably, if you stare at an image for too long, you come to hate it and find all the obvious flaws. In my case, with the last few colour choices, I noted that the overall feel was becoming muddy and I started to think that the overall composition was too busy. So what to do next?

I either have the option of pressing Delete on the overall image, or I can try to apply a production-styled approach. Time to get back to basics!
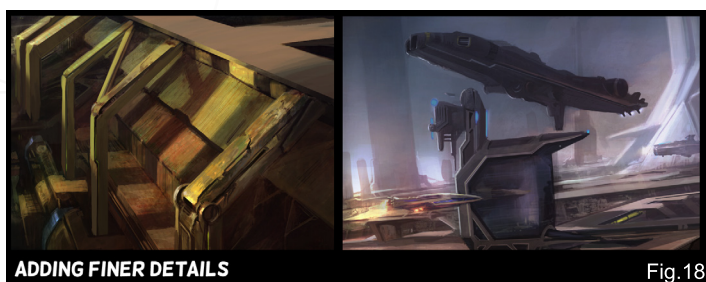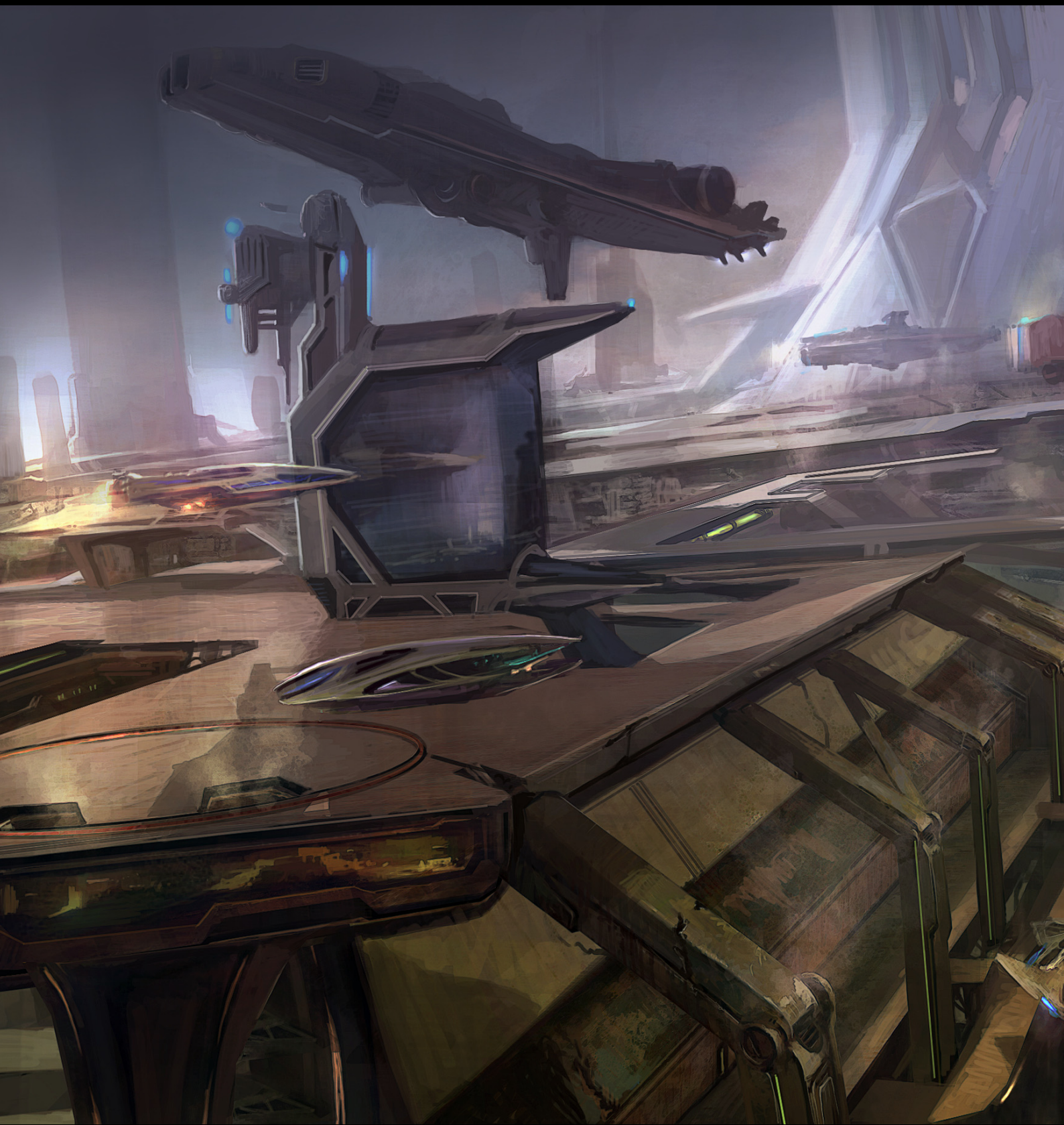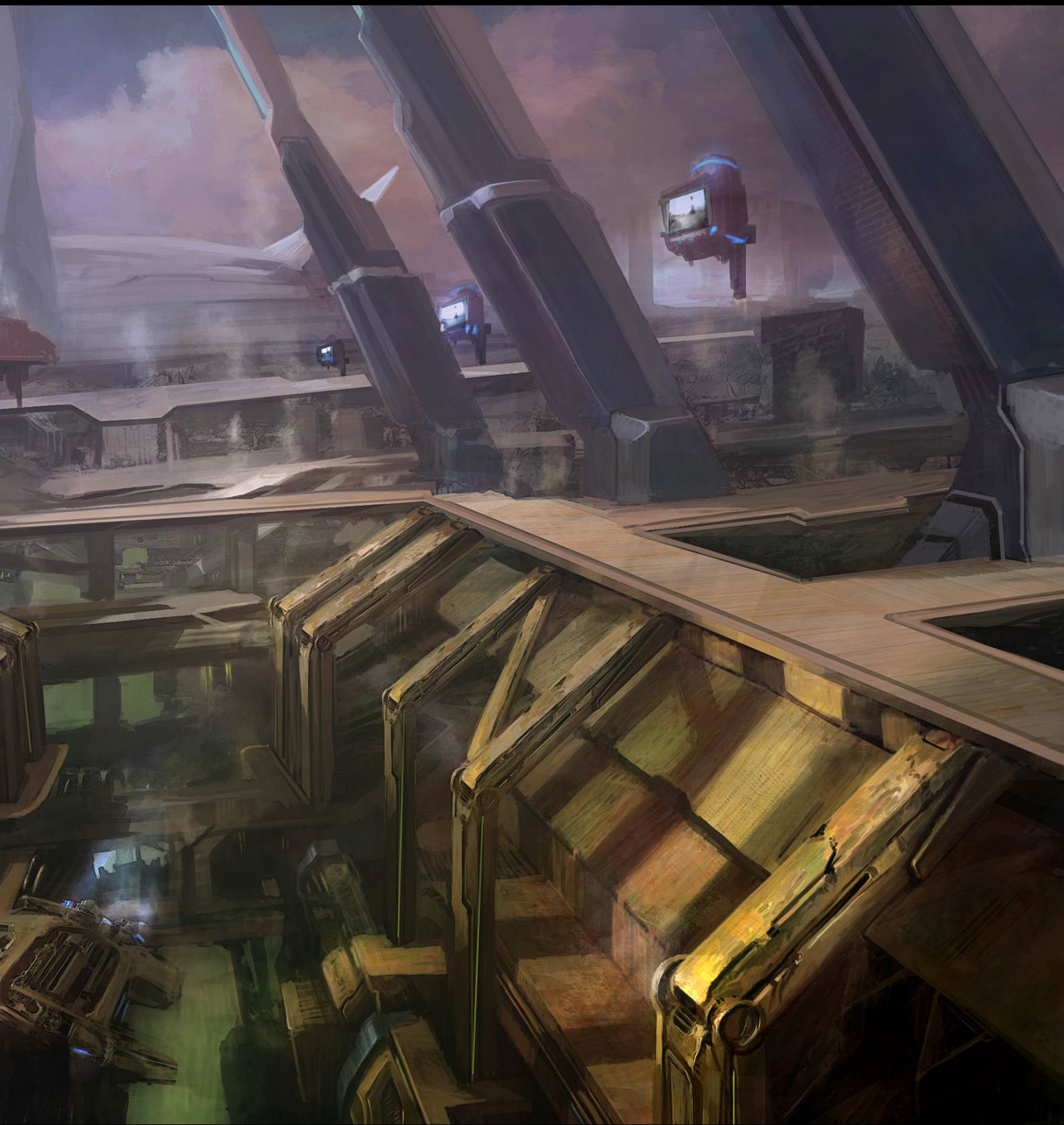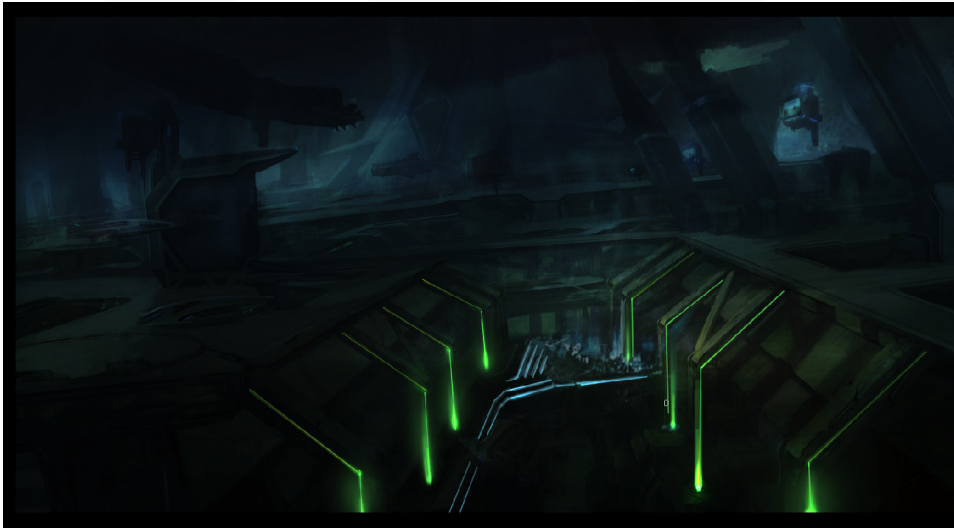
Fig.19
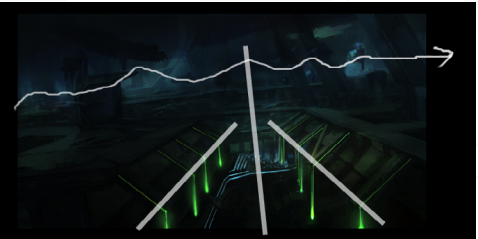
USING REINFORCING LIGHTS
TO AID COMPOSITION
AND ADD MOOD

Fig.20

The first step is to simplify the whole design – entirely (**Fig.17**). So, let's go back to our first steps employed in greyscale, only this time we'll paint entirely in colour. This means selecting out areas that are in the same plane; using the lasso tool you can pick out the upper walkways and lower areas, one by one. Subsequently, save this selection as an alpha mask in your channels layer, for quick access later. Using a new layer, block in the same colour and value for any surface sharing the same plane/angle. Since there is a focal light source, these should all share the same directional light and ambient light source. Then block out the corresponding shadows.

Coloured Details

Using the same process, we can now add further detail, and wear and tear, to various objects (**Fig.18**); texture overlays can help provide this feel. I have chosen to simply paint in various colours, based on flaking rust and worn paint, onto these large arches (bottom right).

The large industrial spaceship is now spruced up and elements of the sky colour incorporated directly to provide the right exposure and detail. The smaller civilian craft in front is painted within the reflected glass control tower and subtle reddish engine washes applied.
And here is the final daylight image, with the restructured elements (**Fig.19**). Gone is the asymmetrical design in favour of a more parallel

and central feeling. Care was taken to ensure that the opposing arches were in shadow and the landing pad area has been restructured to look logical and functional.

Colour Final: Twilight

For the final alternative we will repaint the scene within a night/twilight mood (**Fig.20**).

For this scene, I apply a saturated blue/green feel. Many details from the original painting have to be culled, however, as they detracted from the overall composition. The main premise now is to use the arches as glow-lit supports heading into the centre. The horizon is painted as a thin wedge of bluish twilight, as if there is an overall cloud layer that is set quite low.
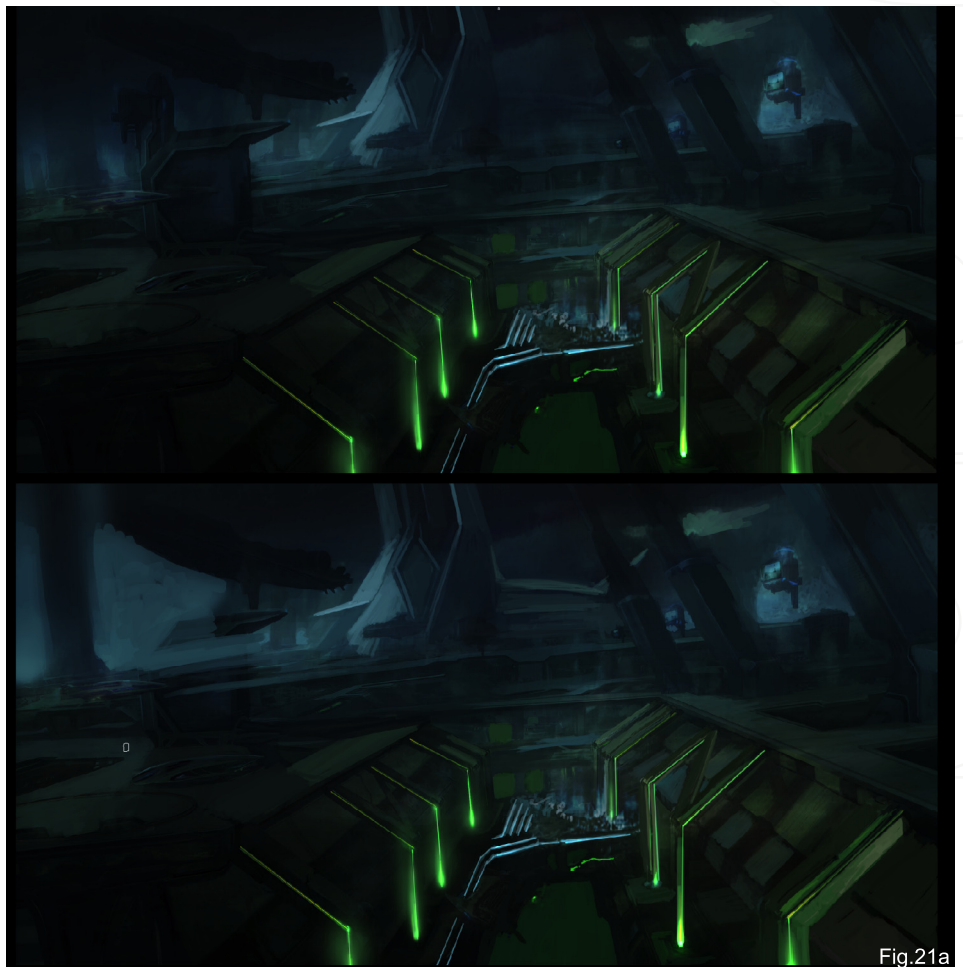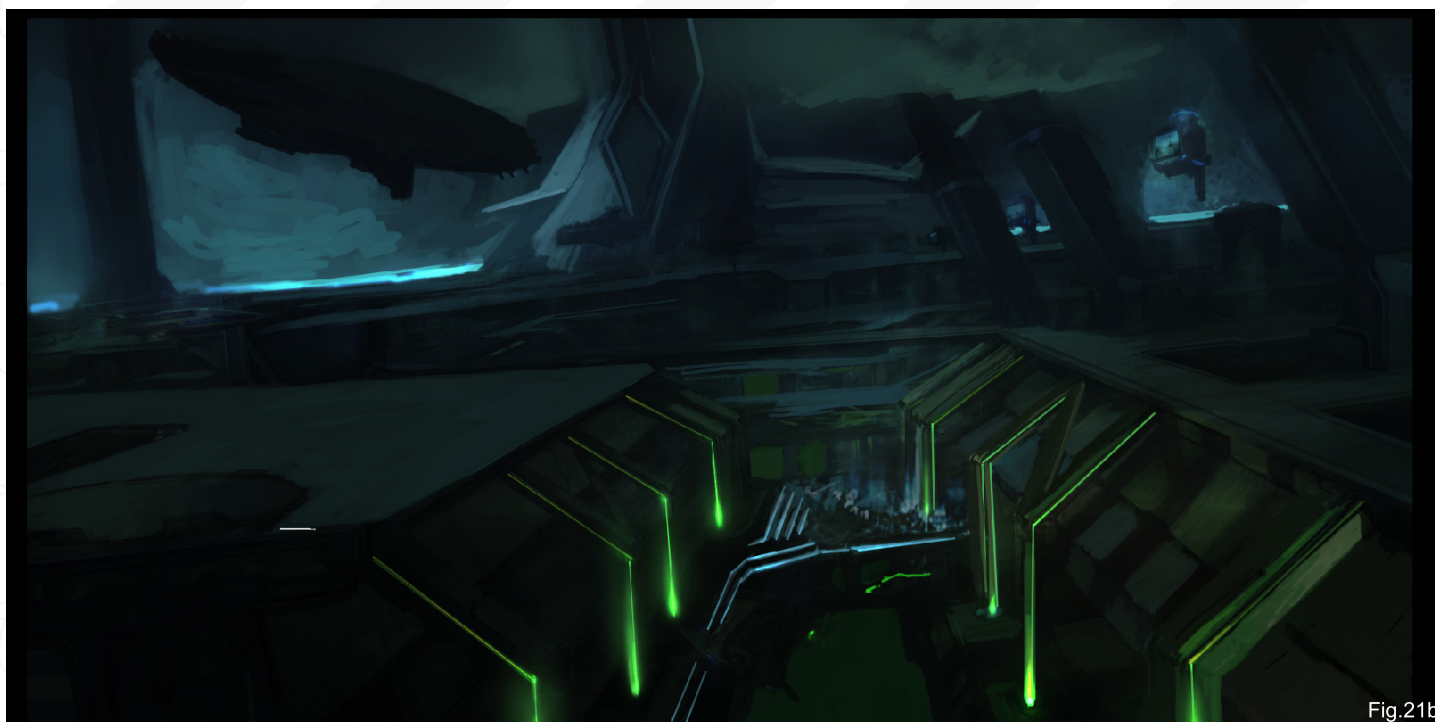

Fig.21a

Fig.21b

The next few stages detail further how the horizon is lit up with various clouds (**Fig.21**). Further culls involve removing elements such as the control tower and the giant, diagonal plinths (far right). The landing area (far left) is now restructured into a flattish landing pad, whilst the large spaceship is a dirigible-like warship. For the final touches, elements of the central tower are restructured and lit with beams of searchlights and bands of horizontal lights to suggest scale and focal interest (**Fig.22**). The massive tower to the far left now serves as a secondary space elevator with a simplified form. And the civilian spacecraft is under-lit with local lighting to suggest its overall shape.
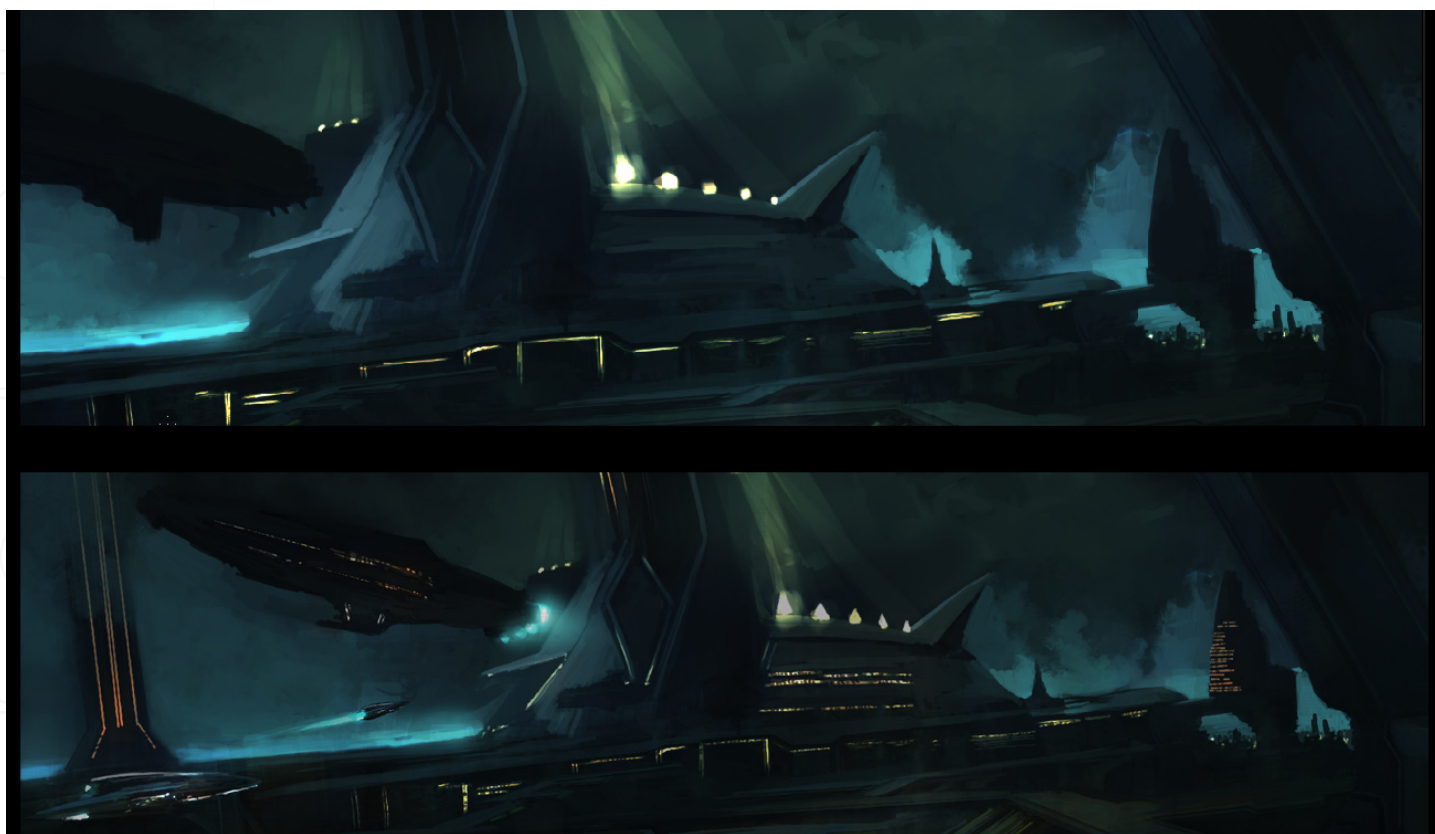
FINAL TOUCHES

Fig.22

Summary

Overall, we have looked at various ways to work
a production painting from various angles and
troubleshoot various design elements in both
greyscale and colour. I hope this has been an
informative insight into tracking a sci-fi theme
that invariably crops up in one's line of freelance
or professional work, or even in one's own
leisurely paintings.

Dr Chee Ming Wong

For more from this artist visit:

http://www.opusartz.com

Or contact:

info@opusartz.com
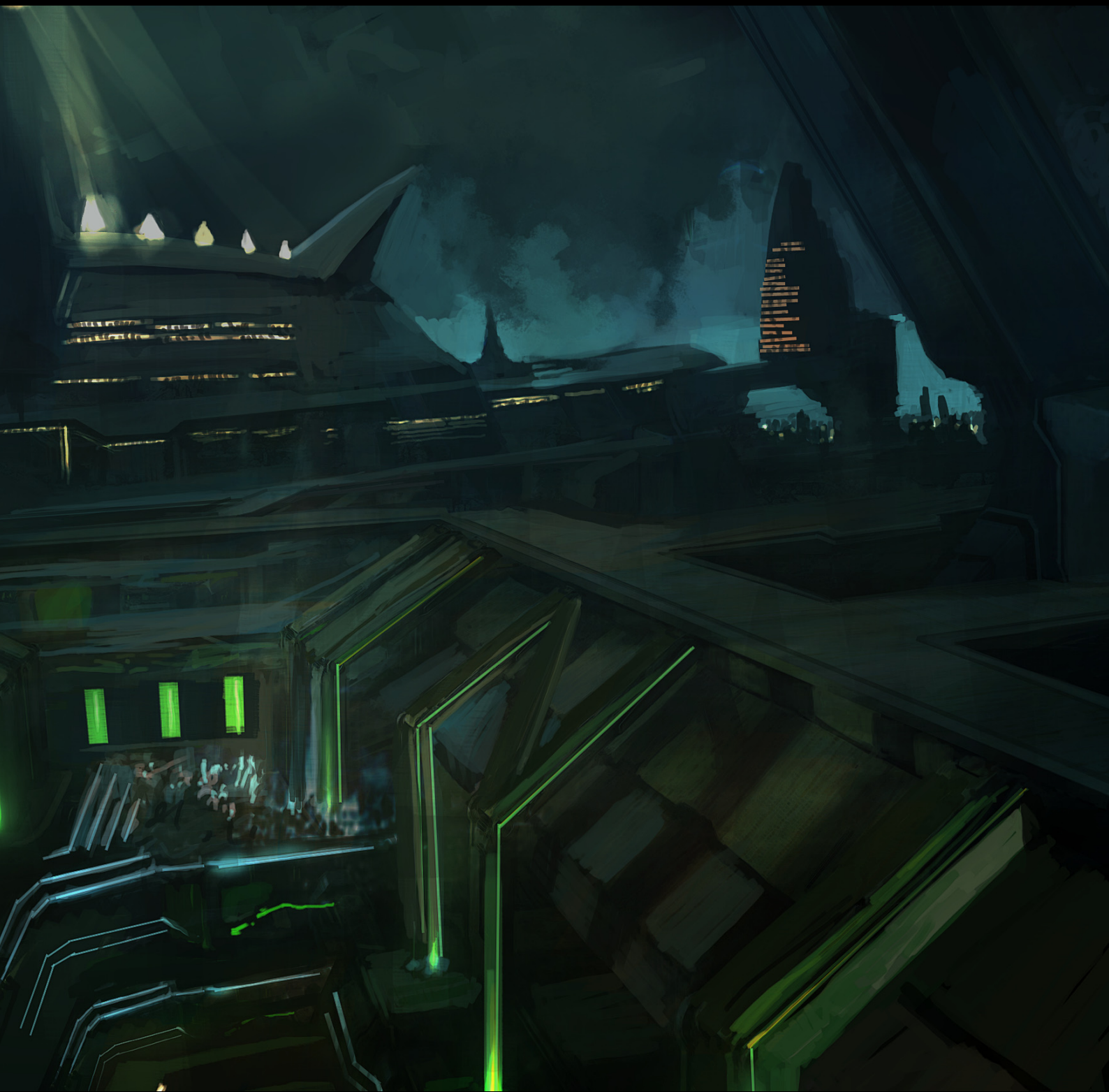
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part two – lips & nose

the human face

Even wondered how to achieve that extra level of realism in your character's face? Or simply wanted to brush up on your knowledge of facial anatomy? Then this excellent, three-part tutorial from Nykolai Aleksander could be just what you were looking for! In these tutorials, Nykolai will take us through several step-by-step guides to creating various realistic facial features - continuing this month with the lips and nose.

Interested? Read on to find out more!

the human face
part two - lips & nose

Created In:

Adobe Photoshop

Here we go with the second instalment of this series. In the first part, in the October issue, we covered the eyes and ears and hopefully those two walkthroughs were useful enough to some of you and you'll be interested in following through the remainder of this short series.

The lips and nose are fairly easy to paint, so you should have no problem following this tutorial. I will make sure again to explain everything as thoroughly as I can (without making it too dull to deal with!), and by the end you should be all set to start painting realistic facial features.

So let's waste no more time and get started!

Lips

Introduction

The lips are probably the second most important

Fig.01

feature in a face, and not only because they can look so pretty. Whilst eyes make a quiet show of emotions, our lips are far more supple and capable of many more visible nuances of expression.

Aside from that, lips are also the part of the human face that seems to have a reputation for being difficult to draw or paint, despite their rather simple appearance. This is mainly to do with the myriad of movements a mouth can make, and the movements of muscles that change the look of a face accordingly. But even

a neutral expression can often seem to cause some problems, and the results can look quite wrong.

Let's look at what a generic pair of lips actually look like (**Fig.01**). The common mistakes made are numerous, from pointed corners of the mouth to a straight line separating the lips, and harsh, exact lines and changes of colour between lips and surrounding skin – something that only happens when you wear meticulously applied lipstick.

As with the previous facial features, I'll be showing you this time how to paint lips from two different perspectives – front and three-quarter view – as these are the most common ones for portraits.

Let's Paint!

Open a new file. Choose a medium flesh tone for the background. Add a new layer, and using the hard round Paintbrush with Opacity and Size Jitter set to Pen Pressure, sketch the lips (**Fig.02**). For the three-quarter view, you will have to think "3D" – the lips follow the pre-determined shape of the skull while keeping their own curved shape, and often this is what causes problems.
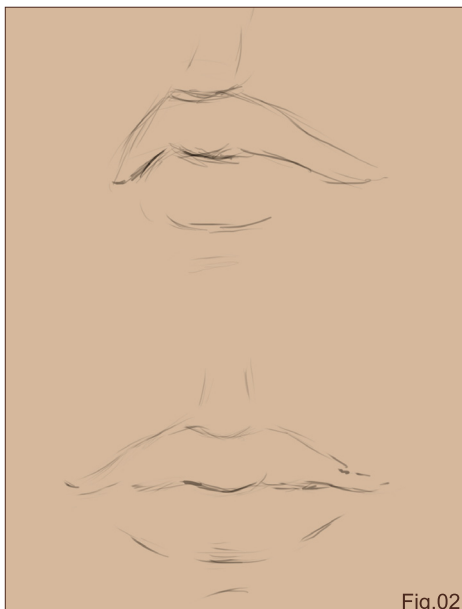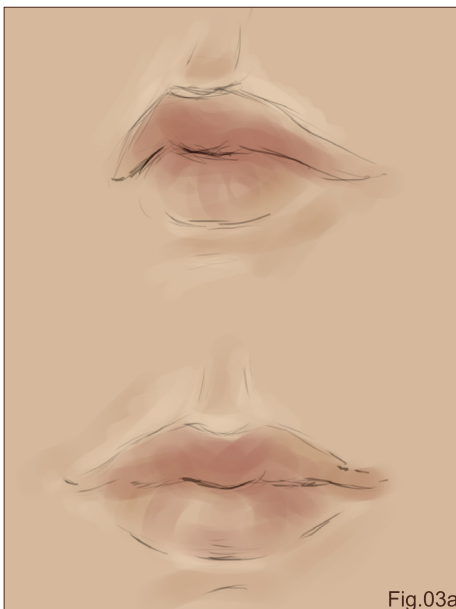

Fig.02

Fig.03a

Now add a new layer underneath the sketch and stick with the round Paintbrush, though you may want to switch off the Size Jitter option. Pick a slightly lighter colour than your flesh-toned background, and add a few highlights around the lips – this will help you to determine the light source and keep it steady. Use a slightly darker reddish tone for some carefully placed shadows. Then pick a brownish-red colour and vaguely fill in the shape of the lips. Try and place your brush strokes to follow the curve of the lips, as this will add some instant volume (**Fig.03a** and **Fig.3b**).

The basic form of the lips and surrounding tissue is laid down with this, and we'll start building on it. So choose a couple of slightly more saturated reddish-brown and pinkish colours and keep working on the lips, applying them more intensely where the upper and lower lips touch, and letting them fade out towards the "outline" of the lips (**Fig.04**). This is usually the point where I start reducing the Opacity and Flow of the brush manually, as well as keeping the Pen Pressure Opacity switched on. To smooth things out a little, you can blend the brush strokes by picking the Smudge Tool, set to Finger Painting, with a speckled brush set to Scatter, and Strength to Pen Pressure. Don't
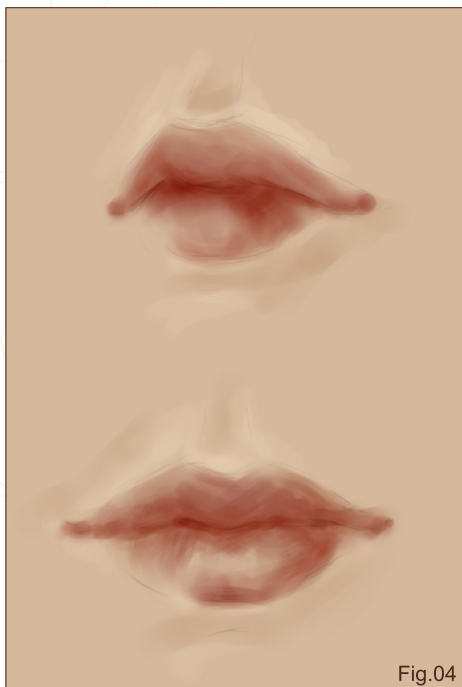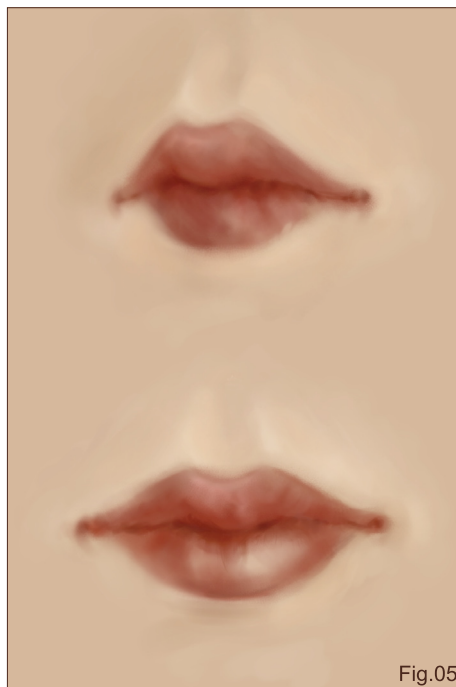
Direction of brush strokes

Fig.03b

smudge it too much though, as we still want some distinct lines on the lips, as these will aid us later with the texturing.

We keep working on the lips' volume at this stage, adding a variety of reds and pinks – all very close together, and all in the brown colour range. Always make sure you work with the curve of the lips, be it when applying the colours, or when blending them. Gently blend the colours using the Smudge Tool, as before (**Fig.05**).

This is a good point to add some first hints of texture and definition. A round medium soft Paintbrush with Size Jitter set to Pen Pressure

Fig.04

Fig.05

works perfectly for this, loosely adding lines and dots. Again, carefully blend certain areas while leaving focal points untouched (**Fig.06**).

From here on, it's all about shaping and details. In my case, I wasn't quite happy with the lips' shape, and altered it a little. It's easier to change things before adding lots of detail, so make sure you are happy with your work before you dive into the last phase. Using the same brushes as before, we soften as well as refine the lips. Pay attention to the fact that the "line" that separates upper and lower lip is not really a line, but a
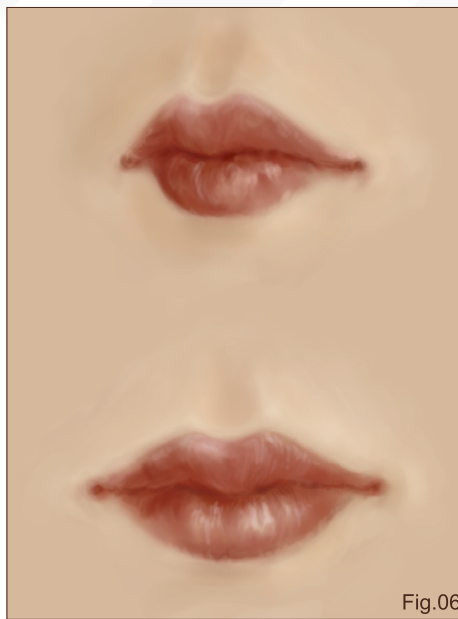
Fig.06
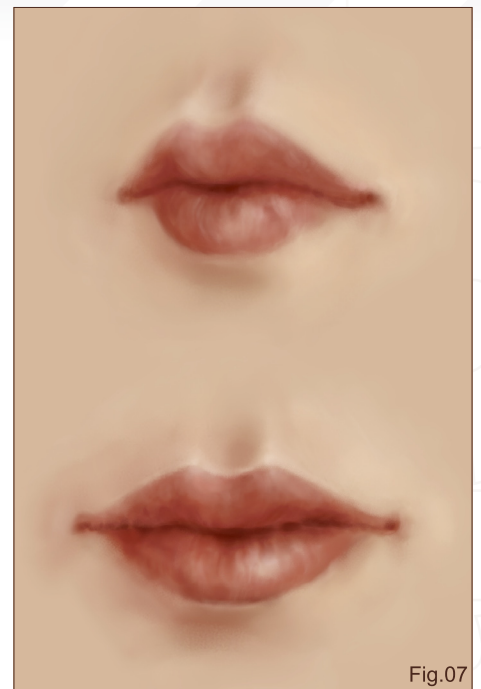
Fig.07

shadow. Therefore, soften it – enough to not make it look like an actual line, and not so much as that it blends in with the rest (**Fig.07**).

Now we come to the fun part – we're going to go a bit crazy with the brush! Select a small round brush, set the Size Jitter to Pen Pressure and switch off the Opacity Jitter. Add a new layer, pick a light colour that works with your lips – in this case I used very light pink and very light yellow – and dot the brush around randomly. Don't worry about going over the edges of the lips; you can erase what you don't want later. Alternatively, you can choose a speckled brush and just stamp it over the lips a few times. Not as much fun, but gives you the same result. Now set the Layer to Overlay or Soft Light, and reduce the Opacity as much or little as you see fit. Erase those bits of the dots that you don't want, or lightly erase what you don't want to show too strongly. You can also smudge the dots a little, or apply the Median or Gaussian Blur Filter. Repeat this procedure on more layers with both light and dark colours to get the best results. As a last step, pick one of the darker colours from the lips, and using a round Paintbrush with Opacity and Size set to Pen Pressure add a few more refining lines. Blend as needed, and … there are you lips (**Fig.08**)!
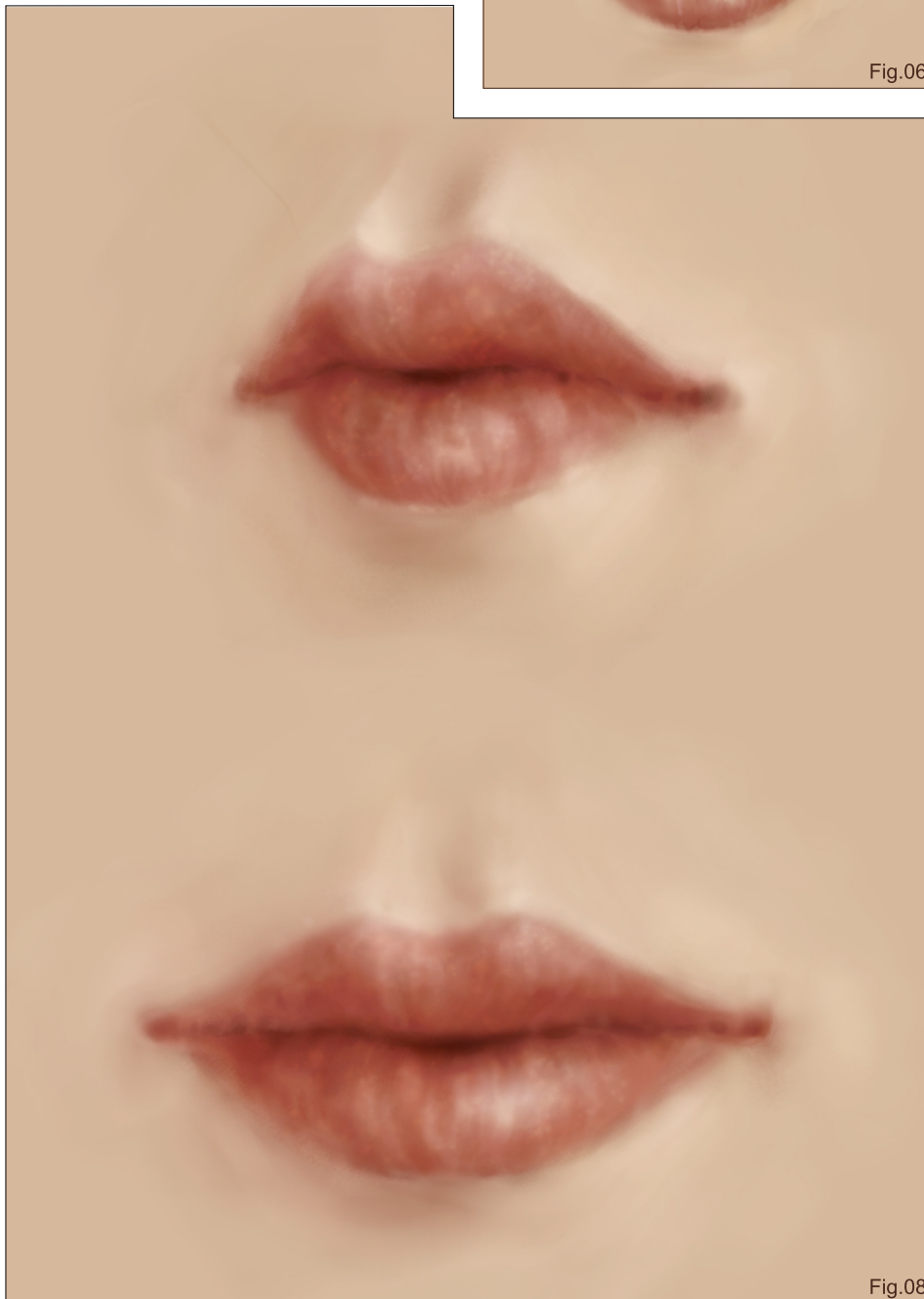

Fig.08

Nose

Introduction

The nose is inarguably the focal point of any face. When someone has a big or crooked nose, this is what we notice before we take in anything else (even if we don't want to admit it). Noses come in many shapes and sizes, and what is interesting about this is that their shape and size influences, and is influenced by, the shape of the rest of the facial features. Also, the shape and size of the underlying bone and cartilage (the bridge) dictates what size and shape the tip of the nose will be. Sounds complex? – It's not, really. If you have a straight, wide nose bridge, you simply won't have a thin, pointed tip. If the bridge of your nose is high, you won't have a flat tip, unless the bridge is also severely crooked.

The problems people seem to face when painting noses range from the angle of the nose in accordance to the rest of the face, to the
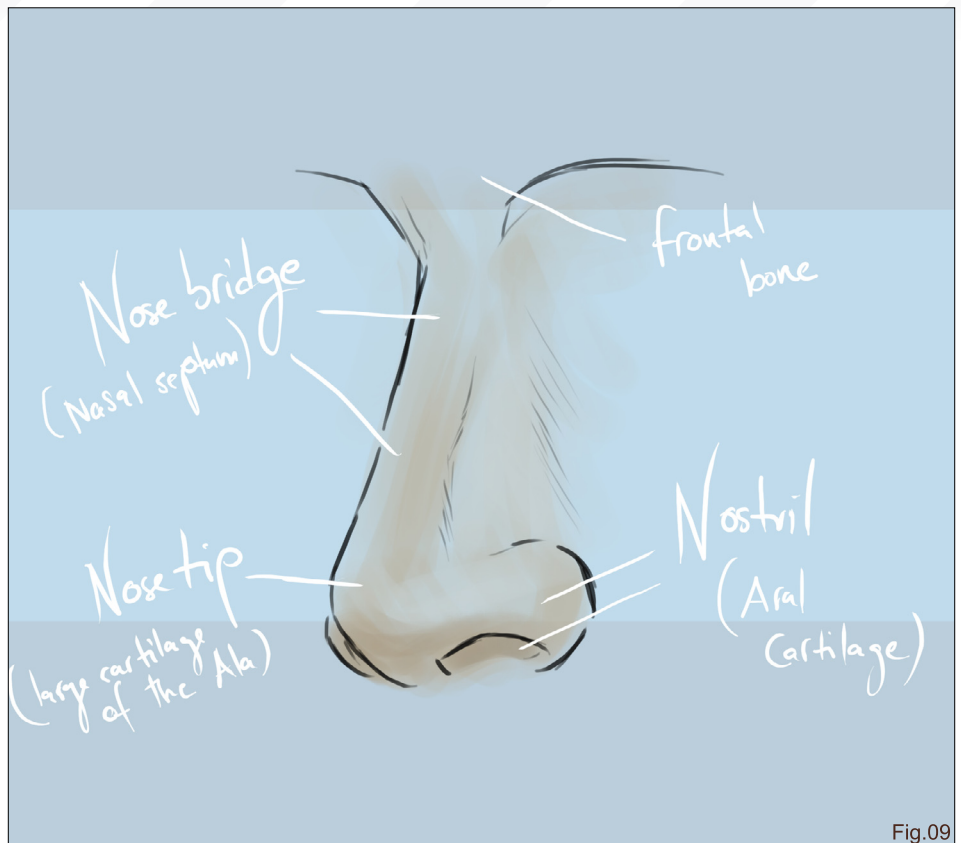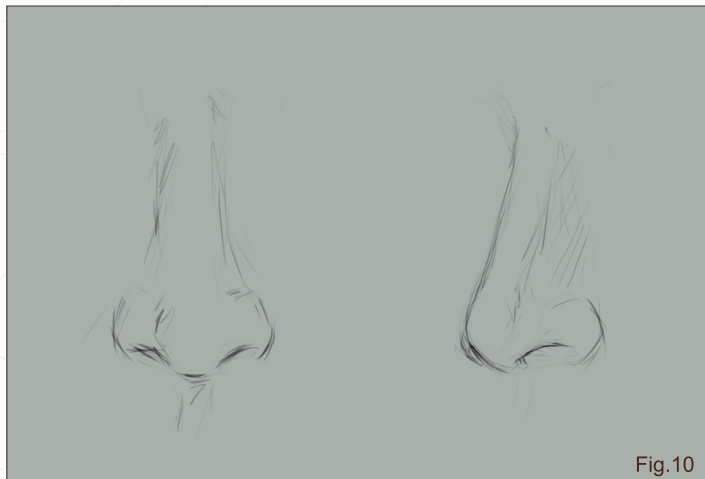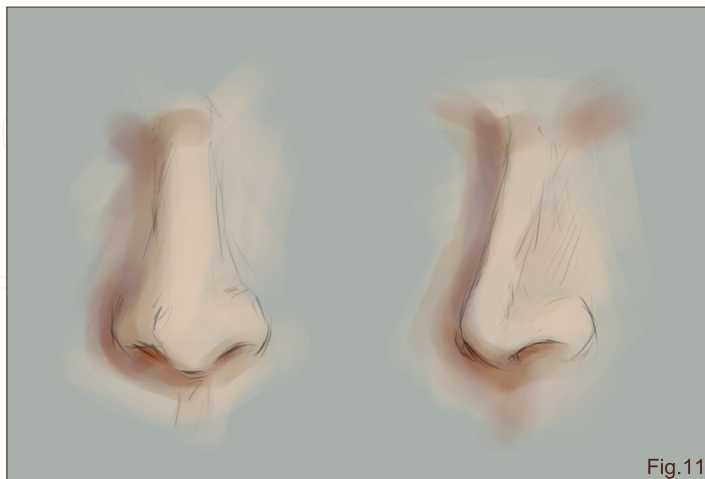

Fig.09

general shape of one. Even some drawing books show noses as if they are comprised of lots of knobbly bits, making them look very bulbous. Since most of us seem to like straight and pretty noses, the general shape should be something like this (**Fig.09**).

Let's Paint!

Start as before with a clean canvas, and make the background colour a neutral tone. Add a new layer, and draw your sketch using a small round Paintbrush, with Size and Opacity Jitter set to Pen Pressure. It is usually a bit easier drawing or painting noses when you have a face to paint them into, so you can do just that if you like. I will, for the purpose of this tutorial, stick to a blank canvas (**Fig.10**).

Fig.10

Add another layer beneath the sketch layer, pick a medium skin tone and block in the nose using a round Paintbrush, with Size Jitter switched off, and Opacity set to Pen Pressure. Then choose your shadow colour and gently add it where you need it (**Fig.11**). It's always quite nice to use a somewhat saturated orange-brown for your shadows, as well as a muted purple, as the skin around the tip of the nose is usually slightly redder. Also, try to avoid black or very dark brown for your deep shadows, unless you are painting a very dark portrait, as it always looks slightly flat.

Smooth your colours out using the Smudge Tool, just as before set to Finger Painting, with a speckled brush tip and Strength Jitter set to Pen Pressure. Once you've done that, refine your general nose shape a little

Fig.11

by adding more subtle shadows – the tones in the midrange, meaning neither in full light nor in full shadow (**Fig.12a** and **Fig.12b**). You'll be pleasantly surprised to find that if you were to remove your sketch layer now, you'd see a rather distinct nose already.

So from here on we shall refine the nose, working with what we've already got, using the standard round Paintbrush and the Smudge Tool set to Finger Painting, as before. You can of course make alterations if you are not really happy with what you've done. You may want to start with refining the nostrils. Refrain from painting any sharp lines here; rather, make use of a softer Paintbrush and paint shadowy blobs. The same goes for the "outlines" of the nostril where it curves in on the surrounding skin.

Blend these areas with care: you don't want sharp lines, but neither do you want everything to be completely smudged (**Fig.13**). Once you've got all that, choose a nice, light colour and add the first proper highlights, namely on the tip of the nose and down the bridge, and some also around the nostril.

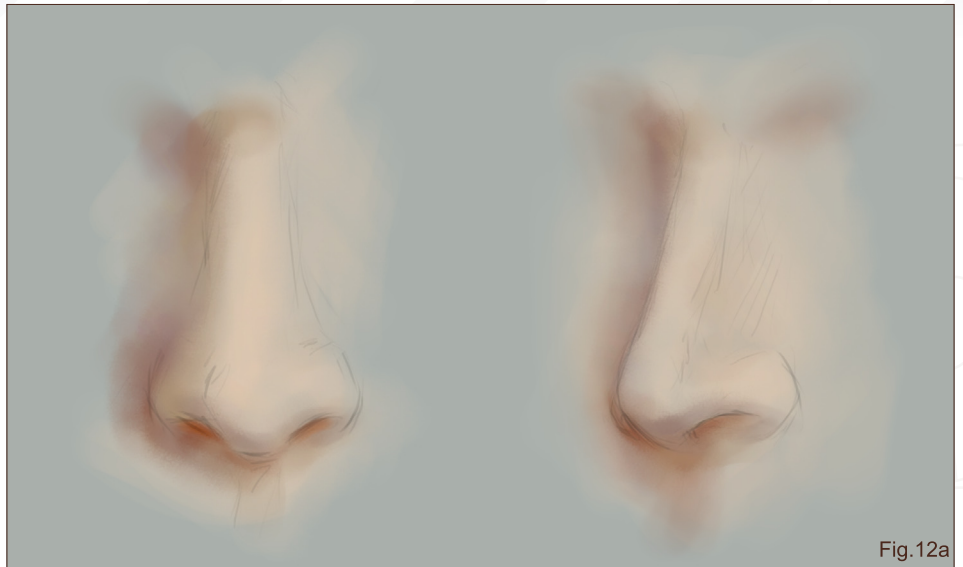There is not much left to do now other than more refining. If you are going for a soft and

Fig.12a

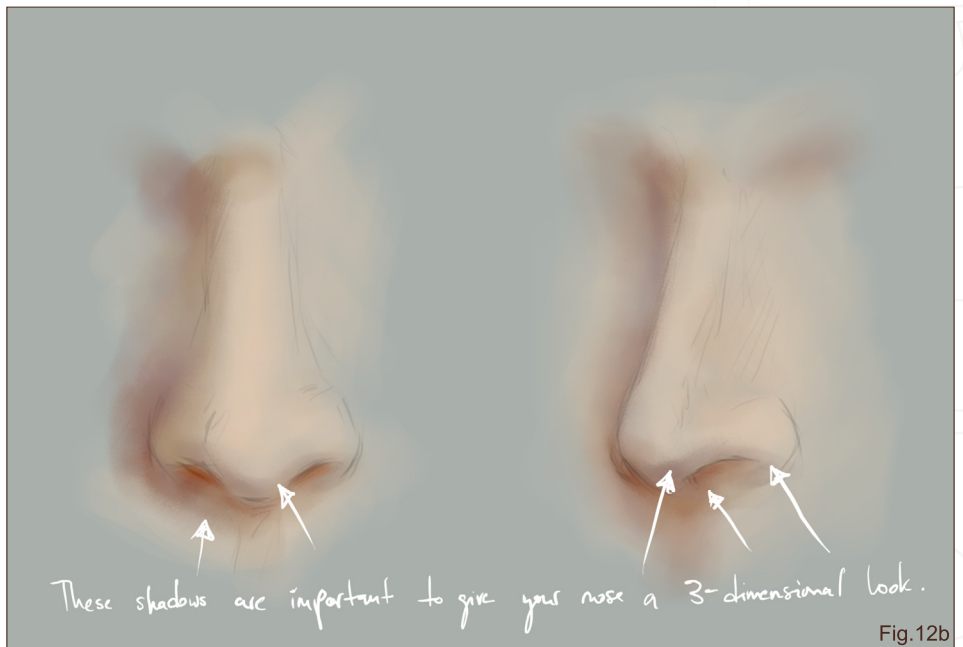These shadows are important to give your nose a 3-dimensional look.

Fig.12b

Fig.13

dreamy kind of portrait, leaving everything slightly blurred with just a few focal parts is just fine. If you're going for something more photo realistic or graphical, bringing out the features more works best. I am going to refine the nostrils a bit more, and add some more saturated shadows (**Fig.14**).

Your nose is done at this point. Now, if you wish, you can add some texture or freckles. For freckles, add a new layer, select a speckled brush, set it to Angle Jitter, and, choosing a light colour, stamp it over the nose. Now set the layer to Overlay and reduce the Opacity as much or little as you like. Add another layer and

repeat the stamping with a darker colour, and preferably a different speckled brush. Again, set it to Overlay or Soft Light, and reduce the Opacity as needed. You can repeat this as often as you like or want. You can do the same thing with a texture brush to simply add some skin texture. And there you have your nose (**Fig.15**).

Now you're all set to start painting faces. And if you think you are not, the last instalment of this series should help you with that next month.

Nykolai Aleksander
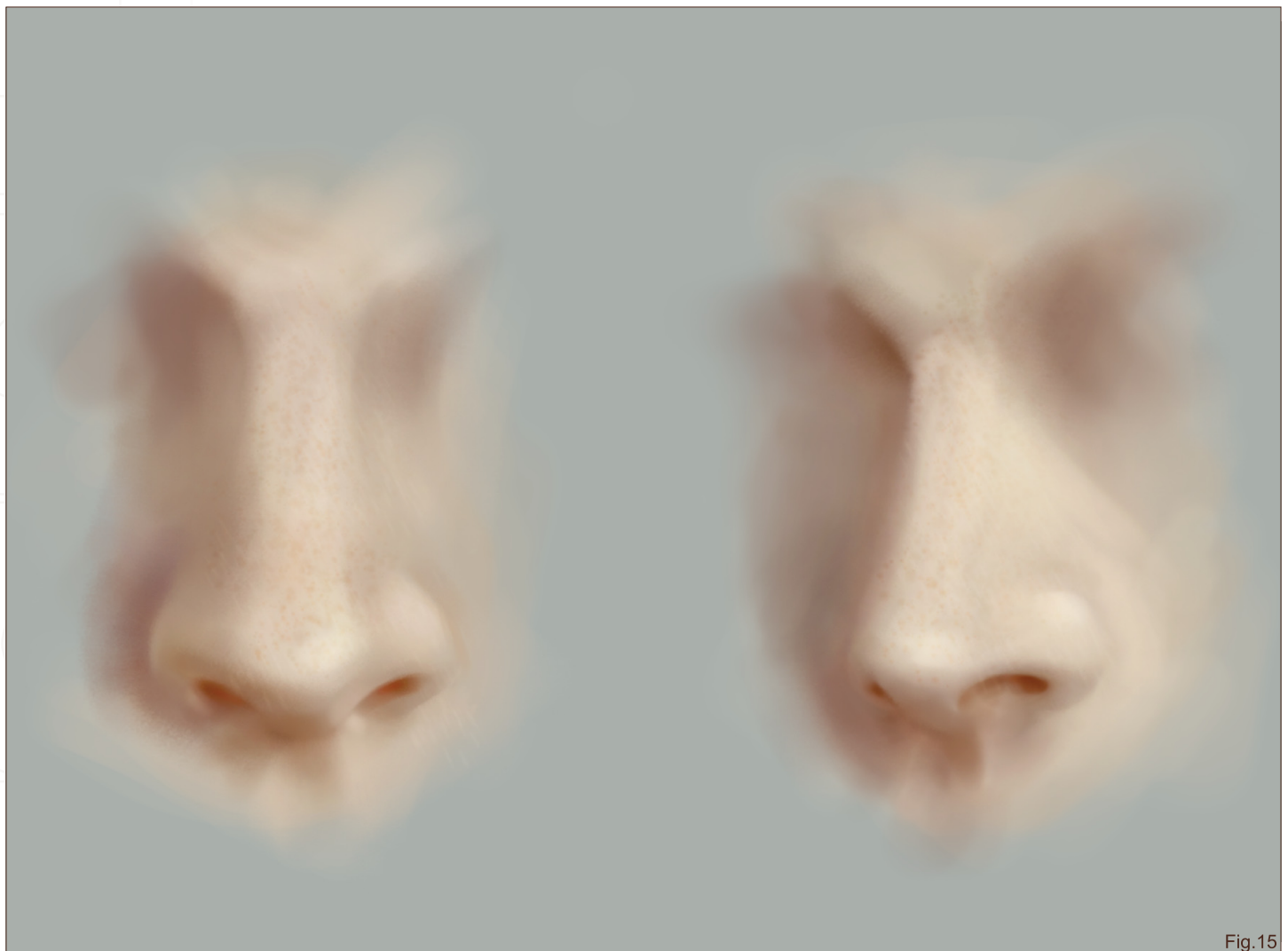
For more from this artist visit:

http://www.admemento.com/

Or contact:

x@admemento.com

Fig.14

Fig.15

"It is always good to have references for your particular subject on hand, but also to be inspired by stuff that has no apparent connection to your image as well."

WORM LICKER

MAKING OF BY IOAN DUMITRESCU

Ioan Dumitrescu shares the process taken to create this digital painting "Worm Licker", from the intial ideas stage all the way through to the final image.

WORM LICKER

Created In:

Photoshop

Hello, my name is Ioan Dumitrescu (aka Jonone); I'm a 20-year old self-taught concept designer and a student of architecture. In this making of article I will try talking you through some thoughts, ideas and show you some of the workflow behind the creation of my "Worm Licker" image.

It all started after I finished some work and needed to blow some steam. So I started doing some thumbnails on A4 Xerox paper, letting my thoughts roam wherever they wanted, with my hand following closely. When working like this I usually don't think of a subject or story whilst doing them – they're just for relaxation purposes. All of a sudden, when I started working on a larger scale on clean paper, I saw an eye and a worm-like mouth appear, so I followed that track by turning the image into some sort of deformed worm with arms (**Fig.01**).

At this stage I would usually have an idea and build a story to continue the piece with, and this image was no exception to that rule. So I imagined a worm-like creature getting hit by light; the light being filtered between leaves and branches of trees in a dense forest; the creature hating light and being terribly disturbed by it.

Fig.01
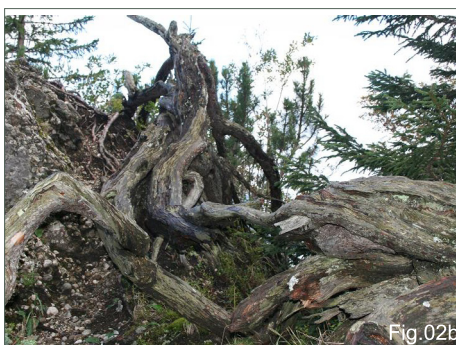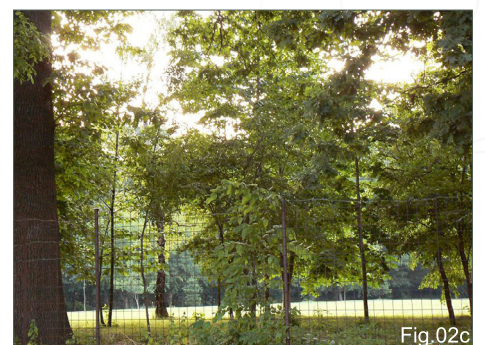
It is always good to have references for your particular subject on hand, but also to be inspired by stuff that has no apparent connection to your image as well. Here are three images photographed by me that I used as references and for textures (**Fig.02a**, **Fig.02b** and **Fig.02c**). If you are using references for atmosphere or colour then don't colour-pick!

Fig.02a

Fig.02b

Fig.02c

Try finding the colours for yourself; try to get a 'feeling' for the appropriate colours (of course looking back at some basic colour theory will always be helpful). Always try to picture things in your mind; try thinking about all of your moves before you make them, and you will learn a great deal – some techniques will even become like reflexes!

So with this in mind I started a new document in Photoshop. I didn't scan or photograph the sketch, as the idea I had in mind followed a slightly different pattern (plus I didn't like the sketch – it was too ugly for me, but it at least helped as a starting point). The first thing was to start blocking-in shapes; I knew things were going to be dark with some highlights, and I had the colour palette pretty much defined in my head, so I started exploring a bit. Using a large brush, I defined the contour of the creature, and because of the lighting situation it was important to have a good, strong – massive in this case – silhouette. I then decided on the composition. As far as the colour scheme went, I wanted the colours to help connect the image with nature, but at the same time I wanted to create a dark, slimy feel, so I therefore chose greens and blues with yellows and browns for contrast (**Fig.03**).

Fig.03

Fig.04

With those basic shades defined, I then added a few more colours which all derived from the initial ones, and started to better define the shapes and add a few more details. The background was clearly too rough and didn't convey anything of what I wanted, so I started adding a bit more yellow and darkening the base, therefore helping the composition as well. With a few texture brushes, I headed towards the textural, chaotic and organic feel that I was hoping for. I also had some kind of veins/roots/flesh stuck to something where the worm had nested (or was hanging from) before it had got struck by the light and violently uprooted – obviously in agony, therefore stretching the veins/roots/flesh material. At this point I felt the need for some texture on him, so I brought in some bark textures and leaves which I had photographed, and started painting over them, reinforcing the image and the idea that he was half underground and half above ground. Lots of flora was growing on him (perhaps for camouflage?), and I also gave him a twisted tongue as I thought it would be funny (**Fig.04**).

Here it was time to wrap up the image, but before I did that I realised that I didn't like his mouth and so started changing it with the hope of ending up with something that suggested a scream of agony. His neck area needed some

other forms to separate the mouth and chin from the neck and body, so I split the chin and left the results of this as the final design. I enlarged his base as well, giving him a bit more stability and an overall cohesion of mass. Next on the "to do" list was the stretched veins/flesh; in short, they weren't stretched and didn't help the diagonal composition, so I adjusted them. His tummy was a big "blob", so I added some soft light hitting it, showing some vegetation and layers of flesh and fat one upon another, suggesting more tension beneath the chin and the neck area.

Now it was time for fun part: final highlights and details! I had neglected the tongue and mouth area so here I started suggesting the teeth (two sets: one exterior and one interior – that's my favourite combination!), lightened up the tongue… and what worm monster is a real monster without some slime being spat into the surrounding environment? I added some highlights on those two knife-like arms, showing that they were made of some sort of bone with sharp tooth-like edges, and some more flesh and flora was given to his stretched thingies and belly area… et voila! It was done.

I'm pretty happy with the way it turned out. Here's the final image (**Fig.05**).

Ioan Dumitrescu aka Jonone

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Fig.05

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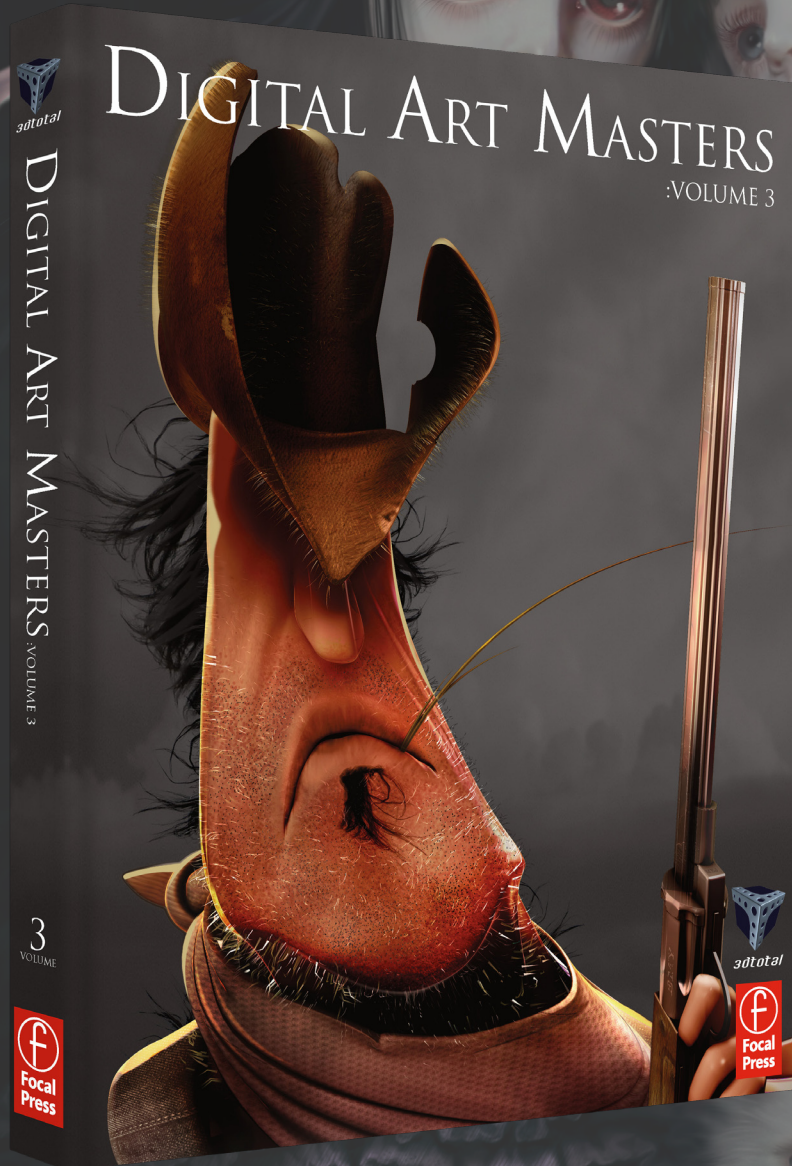Chris Carter, Olivier Cannone, Den Fox, plus more!

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"Black Cat White Cat"
by Eli Effenberger

The following shots of the "Balck Cat White Cat" book pages are featured here in full-resolution and can be read by zooming in...

BLACK CAT WHITE CAT

BY ELI EFFENBERGER

INTRODUCTION

It was one of those rare, lucky occasions where I could see the image vividly before my eyes, so I could foresee the coming stages and plan the workflow accordingly. As I started working, I knew I was going to take my time. Still very new to digital media, working with a pen tablet and using Photoshop as my only tool, I was planning to use the coming painting to depict realistic characters. My emphasis was on facial expression and tension in both composition and texture. The first thing I decided on was the color scheme. I wanted it to be nearly monochromatic so it would not crowd the composition and leave room for viewers to focus their attention on smaller details – such as subtle expressions – which would create the tension. I wanted this piece to have a "close to life yet not living" feeling, which was what I chose primarily to focus on. This is what makes one person (such as myself) fall in love with dolls, and yet another to get goosebumps from them!

Entirely inspired by French ball joint dolls, and the Asian Gothic culture, I was striving to communicate a "cute yet somewhat disturbing" atmosphere through this piece.

THE "MAKING OF"

First I came up with a quick doodle for the positioning and composition (Fig.01). I scanned it and placed it on my canvas on a layer set to Multiply. The doodle was mainly meant as a basic guideline, but not really to be used as the base line work. The positioning was still going to change, and also I wanted a more realistic feeling than my quick stylised sketch could portray.

The first thing I always do when starting on a new drawing is to quickly fill in just basic dabs of color to get the right balance in the foundation (Fig.02). I do this at a relatively low resolution: 150 dpi canvas. This is so I can quickly blend in many colors and not have to worry about traveling "long distances" on a huge canvas (my final resolution would be an intensive 600 dpi canvas for extra fine details, but it'll be much later in the painting before I boost up the dpi).

Now, since I was using a very basic scheme here, it didn't take very long and it wasn't very complicated to get the balance right. My basic colors were to be pinkish whites and creams, contrasting with dark, desaturated purples and blacks. I wanted to oppose these with dark, desaturated greenish shadows, and also use some red to enhance the deep rich pinks in the eyes and mouths, to get a slightly demonic look (Fig.03).
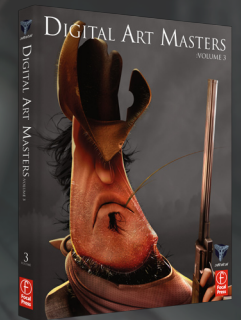
Fig.01

Fig.02

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Once I had the basics done, I decided to get the main focus of the painting resolved as quickly as possible. This way I could be reassured that my painting was heading in the right direction. In my case, it usually means getting started with the faces and hands, as these are the most expressive parts in the painting. Just before doing this, I remembered to boost up the resolution on my canvas (from 150 dpi to 600 dpi). Then I could get into much more detail later on, as the work progressed.

As I started working on the faces, I realized that it would be easier for me to leave the eyeballs to be painted in a later stage. This was due to the fact that I was painting almost expressionless doll faces. Dolls have the most fascinating way of giving the impression of an emotion through their glass eyes, without ever having a defined expression to their faces. Painting the faces without the eyes would let me cognitively separate the porcelain face from the expressive eyes, hopefully resulting in an unusual and intriguing, dollish expression.

The left hand of my black-haired doll was the most complex to draw. I focused on getting it to show the joints but still looking relatively relaxed and natural. Joints can look a little strained if you are not careful! One other point to focus my attention on was the positioning of both the dolls' and cats' feet in perspective to the viewer. After playing around with angles a little, I managed to position them so they poked out, but still kept aligned one with the other (Fig.04).

I then turned to the use of a hard, semi-transparent brush with its Shape Dynamics set to Pressure. I lowered the size dramatically and used it to pinpoint smudges in the fabrics and highlight them – not only to further deepen creases, but also to emphasize smaller features, such as lace detail and frill volume.

At this stage I was considering adding blood stains to the cat paws and floor, just for fun, but finally decided to discard them, and left the unsettling feeling to be created solely by the tension between the characters and through their strange expressions – they were actually becoming "creepy" enough already at this stage!

Finally, I got to the eyes. Painting them on a separate layer, I played around with the shading until I got a nice

Fig.03

Fig.04

Fig.05

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positioning of the eyeball and iris, and left it at that for the time being. Everything was looking pretty good so far, so from this stage onwards it was all about further detailing (Fig.05).

Rethinking some elements in the drawing, I added interest to the cats' collars, shoe design and jewelry. When thinking about striking equilibrium between the doll's shoe and the cat's paw, I came up with a shoe having a cat paw imprinted on the bottom of the sole. If she walks around in the mud (or blood) with them, she'll leave cat footprints all over the floor. (I've got to make shoes like that one day!)

Now that I had all the key features drawn in to my satisfaction, I decided to give the piece some additional thought – for color and fine finishing touches. I did a little color correction using a separate layer set to Hue, added a little shimmer to the eyes and lips, drew in a few stray whiskers and… done (Fig.06)!

CONCLUSION

It was probably the first time I produced such a close match to the original image I had in mind when I first started working. Also, I found that the work process was quite consistent. There were no big mess-ups in the middle, so even though the painting took an awfully long time to complete, it was really fun and I learned a lot about digital painting – and that, after all, was my initial hope!

Fig.06

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